

# Montana Department of Justice Law Enforcement Academy



## State-Owned Heritage Properties Report

*Reporting Period: 2019*

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## **Executive Summary**

The Montana Law Enforcement Academy is currently located northeast of Helena on the former campus of The Mountain View School for Girls (The Montana Vocational School for Girls). This campus covers approximately 22 acres and consists of 15 structures constructed between 1920 and 2019. The total square footage for these buildings is approximately 104,000. For this reporting period, approximately 1,911 students attended various classes utilizing many of the different buildings and structures of the Montana Law Enforcement Academy campus.

In accordance with the Montana Antiquities Act, the Montana Law Enforcement Academy is submitting the 2016 – 2017 Biennial Report. As required by Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) 22-3-424(4): “an act requiring state agencies and the Montana University System to biennially report to the Preservation Review Board on the status and maintenance needs of agency heritage properties.”

MCA 22-3-424(4) outlines five reporting requirements state agencies must include in their report to the Preservation Board. The statute requires the following:

- A. A list of heritage properties managed by the agencies as those properties have been identified pursuant to this section;
- B. The status and condition of each heritage property;
- C. The stewardship efforts in which the agencies have engaged to maintain each heritage property and the cost of those activities;
- D. A prioritized list of the maintenance needs of the properties; and
- E. A record of the agencies’ compliance with subsections MCA 22-3-424(1) and (2).

## **History**

The Montana State Vocational School for Girls was built in 1919. Prior to 1919, the state’s only correctional facility for girls was the State Reform School at Miles City. The majority of the State Reform School’s population was male. In 1917, the State Federation of Women’s Clubs and the Good Government Club, also a women’s group began lobbying the state legislature for a separate facility for girls. Their efforts succeeded in 1919 when the legislature created the State Vocational School for Girls.

The Good Government Club, which ultimately evolved into the Montana League of Women Voters, included in its membership several women who had in 1914 led the successful effort to gain suffrage for Montana women. Jeanette Rankin, the first U.S. Congresswoman, and Dr. Maria Dean, one of the first women doctors in

Montana, were prominent in the club. Dr. Dean who led the fight to establish a separate school had been an active suffragette for a number of years.

The 1919 Legislature authorized the school and provided funds to purchase the 400 acre Hebert Ranch in the Prickly Pear Valley near Helena as its site. Later that year six girls were moved to the school from Miles City and began residence in the log ranch house. The 400 acres of the ranch were used as a source of food revenue for the maintenance of the school, and as a source of work for the school's population which had expanded to 66 by 1922.



With the exception of Stewart Hall (Administration Building pictured above), all major buildings built in the first years of the school exhibit the major features of the craftsman movement in architecture. Employing the honest expression of structural elements for decoration, the dormitories first stories were constructed in brick with exposed half-timber supports and stucco on their second stories. The interiors were marked by exposed beam ceilings, wainscoting, corner fireplace and built-in window seats. The first major building project at the school was Maria Dean Cottage (Spruce), completed in 1921. Stewart Hall stands out from the craftsman style cottages on campus. Stewart Hall is constructed entirely of brick and features three battlement windows on the second story. Collectively these buildings provide the best representation of craftsman style architecture in Montana.

All the major old buildings at the school lie in a continuous line set back from the county road which fronts the school on the south. The buildings overlook a wide expanse of lawn, which forms a central common. Prickly Pear Creek bisects the nicely landscaped common with two timbered bridges crossing the creek to connect Adair (Aspen) and Maria Dean Hall (Spruce) with the rest of the campus.

In 1967, the State Legislature changed the school's name to Mountain View School for Girls. However, its essential role remained unchanged since 1919. It provided vocational and academic training for girls in a setting similar to that of the early state of its development.

In 1997, the Montana Law Enforcement Academy relocated to the former Mountain View School for Girls. At that time, the condition of the buildings was very poor and deteriorating due to the lack of attention and maintenance. The current Administration of the Montana Law Enforcement Academy has been and continues to diligently work to bring these buildings into a state of repair.

In 2017, the State Legislature approved \$8,100,000 for dormitory and cafeteria building renovations. These improvements are expected to significantly improve the interior appearance and functionality of the Spruce, Aspen and Maple dorm buildings as well as the overall functionality and appearance of the cafeteria. Construction began in January 2019 and is expected to be complete in the fall of 2020.

## **Montana Law Enforcement Academy Heritage Properties**

### **Spruce**



Spruce is a two-story dormitory constructed in 1920. The Montana Law Enforcement Academy (MLEA) continues to use Spruce as a dormitory for students and adjunct instructors. Due to the deteriorating condition of this building, MLEA only uses the basement area for scenarios training. This building consists of 12,660 square feet with 24 dormitory rooms, 1 lounge, 1 computer/game room and a laundry facility. In September 2019 remodeling efforts began to install a new HVAC system, re-enforce the foundation, replace outdated electrical and plumbing services, and install new carpet and paint. Work is expected to be complete in January 2020 at a cost of \$1,658,799.

### **Aspen**



Aspen is a two-story dormitory constructed in 1926. This building consists of 7,344 square feet with 13 dormitory rooms, 1 lounge, 1 conference room and 1 custodian closet. Aspen was the first building to be remodeled and completed in September 2019 at a cost of \$1,020,201. Upgrades included a new HVAC system, improved plumbing and electrical services, reinforced foundation, bathroom remodeling, kitchenette built in the student lounge area and a laundry room added in the basement.

## Maple



The Montana Vocational School for Girls had Maple, a two-story dormitory, constructed in 1922. The Montana Law Enforcement Academy continues to use the second floor of this building as a dormitory and the first floor as administrative offices and common areas for the students to watch television and play games. This building consists of 16,335 square feet with 27 dormitory rooms, 5 administrative offices, 1 conference room, 1 computer room, 1 game room and 1 lounge. The basement of this dorm is also

closed to students however used for various scenarios. In 2020 the Maple dorm will undergo a substantial remodel. HVAC, electrical and plumbing upgrades, foundation re-enforcement, new carpet and fresh paint will all be completed. Upgraded dorm rooms, laundry room and kitchenette will also be added to improve the quality of life for students.

## Cottonwood



Cottonwood is a one story 7,508 square foot dormitory constructed in 1960. The Montana Law Enforcement Academy continues to use Cottonwood as a dormitory for students and adjunct instructors. This building has 28 dormitory rooms, 1 training room, 1 security room/laundry drop off/pick up room and 1 office. In 2019 ten broken windows were replaced at a cost of almost \$5,000 as part of the Academy's ongoing efforts to maintain the aging structure.

## Administration



Originally constructed in 1924 as a School Building at The Montana Vocational School for Girls, it housed classrooms, an infirmary, clinic, laundry and offices. In 1997, the Montana Law Enforcement Academy took possession of the property. MLEA continues to use this building for training and administration. It consists of 10,249 square feet and houses 9 administrative offices, 3 classrooms, 1 conference room and 1 multipurpose room.

## Gymnasium



The Gymnasium/Auditorium was built at The Montana Vocational School for Girls in 1926. The Montana Vocational School for Girls used this building for physical fitness and entertainment purposes (plays, shows).

The Montana Law Enforcement Academy uses the Gymnasium for physical fitness training and testing as well as ceremonies. It consists of 8,100 square feet; the physical fitness area and stage remain on the first floor while the basement has been

converted into a weight room. In 2019 a cardio room was added at a cost of \$15,000 to better meet student physical fitness needs.

## Cafeteria



Built in 1967, the cafeteria was designed to provide food services for the staff and students who attended the Mountainview School for Girls. The cafeteria is a 3,264 square foot single story building with a full service kitchen. In addition to a 65 person dining hall, the building has two bathrooms, a storage area and walk in cooler/freezer. Seating capacity has been inadequate for the size and volume of students that attend Montana Law Enforcement Academy

programs. On a typical training day, it is not uncommon to see as many as 100 students in the cafeteria at the same time during meal hours. In 2019 a major remodel of the cafeteria started and is expected to be complete in the summer of 2020. When complete, the cafeteria will have a new kitchen, expanded and upgraded seating areas, an outdoor patio, conference room and additional bathrooms.

## Heritage Property Status and Conditions

Overall, the Heritage Properties on the Montana Law Enforcement Academy campus rank "Good" or "Fair" for Historic Integrity and Condition and "Satisfactory" for Status. Within the last four years the following projects were completed on the Montana Law Enforcement Academy to improve the condition of heritage properties:

## 1 - Seismic Hazard Mitigation to Buildings

In 2017 seismic bracing and mechanical anchorage improvements were completed on the Administration, Aspen, Cafeteria, Cottonwood, Gymnasium, Maple and Spruce buildings on campus. The goal of the improvements is to provide additional bracing to chimneys, boiler pipes etc. and are intended to mitigate damages caused to these structures as a result of earthquakes. The cost of the project was \$24,975.00.

## 2 - Maple Building Front Steps Repair

In August 2017 work was completed to repair the front steps and landing area for the Maple dormitory building. Maple is the largest dormitory building on campus. The front steps, landing and storage room under the steps were deemed unsafe by inspectors due to weather and age related deterioration. The project replaced the landing and stairs to once again facilitate use of the main entrance to the building. The cost of the project was \$60,000.00

## 3 - Fire Hydrant Replacement

Three of the Academy's five fire hydrants were rendered inoperable due to sand build up in the underground pipes connecting the hydrants to the water tower and well system. This seriously degraded the ability for fire department personnel to fight fires on campus in a timely manner. In June 2017 the project was complete at a cost of \$20,500.00.

## **Heritage Site Stewardship Efforts**

The Montana Law Enforcement Academy is responsible for providing law enforcement, public safety officers and other qualified individuals with a means of securing training in the field of law enforcement and public safety. Through a wide range of basic and professional training programs, the Academy acts to raise the competence and proficiency of law enforcement and public safety officers. Training programs ranging in length from 4 hours to 12 weeks are conducted throughout the year. Professional Development and Outreach programs are provided by the Academy in order to address special needs for local agencies.

## **Maintenance Needs**

The primary preservation needs of the seven heritage property buildings at the Academy are issues of standard building utilization and maintenance. The remodel efforts that began in 2019 and will continue through 2020 will address many of the deteriorating foundations, electrical, plumbing, sewer and other issues that have plagued operations for many years.

## Discovering History

Dorm building remodel efforts are revealing artifacts from the earliest years of the Mountain View School for Girls. Pictured below is a cardboard milk container from the 1930's that was found in the Spruce dorm building.



## Agency Compliance

The current point-of-contact for the Montana Law Enforcement Academy is Mike McCarthy, Operations Manager. Mike may be reached at [mimccarthy@mt.gov](mailto:mimccarthy@mt.gov), 406-444-9950. The Montana Law Enforcement Academy does not have additional heritage policies or programs and relies on the Montana Antiquities Act for support of the heritage buildings.

During the 2016 – 2017 reporting period there were no adverse effects determined for heritage properties at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy.