

## Montana Historical Society to Reopen June 9

The [Montana Historical Society](#) will reopen its exhibits, Research Center, Museum Store and State Historic Preservation Office to the general public beginning Tuesday, June 9. Its public operating hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

[The Original Governor's Mansion](#) will be closed until Phase 3 restrictions of the Governor's reopening plan, due to the inability to practice social distancing.

Once the doors are open, visitors will notice several changes put in place to help prevent transmission of the *novel coronavirus*. The intention is to provide a safe working environment for MHS staff, volunteers, members and visitors while allowing access to materials housed at the Montana Historical Society.

MHS has increased its already rigorous cleaning protocols and installed new hand sanitizing equipment, while adhering to the [CDC protocols](#) for staff and visitors. As part of those health matters, the Montana Historical Society also asks that visitors and volunteers limit socializing with staff.

**"Thank you for your patience as the Montana Historical Society navigates through this rapidly changing world," Director Bruce Whittenberg said. "We miss you and are grateful for your support. We will continue to engage with you through social media, phone calls and emails, and to work behind the scenes to ensure the continuation of our research, grants, magazine, historic preservation, and public outreach."**

He added that people can check out MHS "Stay Connected" activities at <https://mhs.mt.gov/about/QuarantineActivities>

### Reopening the Museum Exhibits and Store

- The MHS exhibits and store will open to the public beginning June 9. **Visitors must follow social distancing guidelines and MHS is limited to 75 percent capacity.**
- The museum galleries will be open during regular business hours Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. They will be closed to the public on Mondays. MHS will not be giving docent-led tours or allow public events.
- MHS strongly encourages patrons to wear masks while in the building and will provide them at the front desk. Gloves will be available for handling merchandise in the museum store.
- MHS will ask for contact information for all visitors, in case someone within the museum community tests positive for COVID-19, prompting the need to undergo contact tracing.
- **If staff or visitors test positive for COVID-19, MHS will immediately shut down and will notify health officials to contact staff and guests. MHS asks that visitors also initiate contact if they become ill within 48 hours of their visits, so MHS can take proper precautions.**
- Public restrooms will be for museum patrons only.
- MHS asks visitors to pay their entrance fees or make purchases using a credit or debit card if possible.
- The galleries will be one-way traffic only. Social distancing still applies to non-family groups.
- Hand-sanitizing stations will be strategically placed throughout the building.
- Visitors and staff who display symptoms like a fever, cough or runny nose will be asked to leave.

## **Reopening the Research Center**

- People needing materials at the Research Center are encouraged to use online resources found at <https://mhs.mt.gov> and/or submit a research request before planning an in-person visit.
- In-person reference hours will be available by appointment only, from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, to allow for cleaning. Contact MHS at [mhslibrary@mt.gov](mailto:mhslibrary@mt.gov) or 406-444-2681 to schedule an appointment.
- Patrons must submit a list of all items they wish to use at least two business days prior to their appointment to allow staff to retrieve items and let them sit in quarantine for 24 hours before use.
- Payment procedures will highly recommend debit or credit cards instead of cash.
- MHS will not provide headsets for researchers to listen to oral histories or other audio. Researchers are welcome to bring their own headsets.
- One public access computer and one microfilm reader will be available to researchers. They will be cleaned between uses. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own laptops and other equipment, including thumb drives.
- One photocopier will be available and cleaned between uses. However, staff highly recommends people use personal cell phones to photograph documents.
- MHS highly recommends researchers wear face masks and abide by the social distancing lines in front of the reference desk and by tables designated for use by researchers.
- Staff will wear gloves while handling collections for researchers.

## **State Historical Preservation Office**

People who need to contact SHPO staff can call 406/444-7715 or email [pebrown@mt.gov](mailto:pebrown@mt.gov) to reach staff, most of whom will continue to work at home during Phase 2. However, staff will continue working electronically with consultants and other agencies.

SHPO staff reserves the right to halt consultation in those rare situations in which hard copy materials are absolutely necessary. Because agreements with some consulting parties specify hard copy consultation and reporting, failure to provide the materials when possible may violate the agreements.

**“We can’t wait to see you soon,” Whittenberg said. “Until then, stay healthy and thank you for your continued support.”**

###

Contact Eve Byron, MHS Public Information Officer, at 406/444-6843 or [eve.byron@mt.gov](mailto:eve.byron@mt.gov) for more information.

225 North Roberts Street  
P. O. Box 201201  
Helena, MT 59620-1201  
(406) 444-2694  
(406) 444-2696 FAX  
[montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org)