

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District

other names/site number Western Montana Fairgrounds/24MO1571

## 2. Location

street & number 1101 South Avenue West

not for publication

city or town Missoula

vicinity

state Montana code MT county Missoula code 063 zip code 59801

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

/State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official>Title

Date

State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>	
11	23	buildings
		district
2		site
4	3	structure
		object
17	26	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE; fair

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE; fair

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements / Craftsman

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: Weatherboard

WOOD: Plywood

roof: METAL: Steel

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### **Summary Paragraph**

The Missoula County Fairgrounds, home to the Western Montana Fair, occupies roughly 46 acres of land in the NW 1/4 of Section 33, T13N R19W. When first established, the fairgrounds lay about a mile and a half southwest of the city limits. In the nearly 100 years since its creation, however, the city has expanded south and west so that the fairground now falls inside the corporate city limits. It is surrounded by a street grid with commercial, civic, educational and parks development. The grounds are bounded on the west and north by two major arterials, Russell Street and South Avenue respectively, and on the east by Stephens Avenue.<sup>1</sup>

The Missoula County Fairgrounds contains a variety of cultural landscape characteristics and associated resources and features that contribute to its eligibility. For this reason, the following detailed narrative description of the property includes discussions of the characteristics that are specifically relevant to the fairgrounds and that contribute to its significance and eligibility. These include: *spatial organization, cluster arrangement, land use, buildings and structures, circulation, vegetation, and small-scale features*.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### ***Spatial organization and cluster arrangement***

The current organization of space within the fairgrounds reflects the pattern established during initial development. The grounds contain three general areas devoted to different uses historically associated with the fair. These include: the race track and its associated features in the south half of the site; a cluster of exhibit buildings that occupies the approximate middle of the grounds; and, a large expanse of open space along the north third of the site.

As the race track was the first improvement to be built in 1914, its siting influenced the construction of all later improvements. It appears that the shape of the underlying land parcel required that the half-mile track be constructed at an oblique angle, thus dominating the south half of the grounds. Structures directly associated with the track, such as the grandstand, bleachers, and judges' stand, were oriented parallel and adjacent to its north straightaway, while racing stables and other outbuildings gradually filled the triangular parcel in the southeast corner of the grounds, south of the race track. Two additional race stables were located northeast of the track near the east edge of the grounds.

Buildings associated with exhibits and displays (for agricultural produce and livestock, home arts, and commercial products) are clustered within a relatively small portion of the grounds north of the track. For the most part these buildings are sited within a rough street grid, oriented north to south and east to west. Although the dimensions of the building cluster remain approximately the same as during the historical period, the historic-era buildings in the western-most row (containing a sheep barn, horse stable, dairy building and a Boy Scouts building) have been replaced by two large, modern steel buildings, which are out of scale with the historical buildings.

The remainder of the space north of the historic exhibit buildings contained no permanent improvements, but was retained as an open grassy field to accommodate temporary open-air exhibits as well as an unimproved parking area.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sometime between 1921 and 1937, the county built a garage and shop on a small rectangular piece of ground in the northwest corner of the open space, and later added a building for truck storage. In the 1970s, the county moved its shops to a site on North Reserve Street and the old shop at the fairgrounds was converted for use as the fair's Rabbit Barn. The Rabbit Barn was removed after 2004 to make room for the expansion of the ice rink. Cohen et al., 1995, p. 62.

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With the exception of the construction of a dance hall in 1980 (B35, the Home Arts Building), the open area north of the exhibit buildings has been retained, and continues to be used as an unpaved parking area, and for open air exhibits such as carnivals and commercial trade fairs.

**Summary:** The overall pattern of spatial organization within the fairgrounds reflects the period of significance. Three general areas, including the race track and its associated infrastructure, the grid containing exhibit buildings, and the open space along the north quarter of the grounds, continue to support the activities associated with the Western Montana Fair.

#### ***Land Use (Open Air Exhibit Area, Parking Area / 2 Contributing sites)***

For the most part land use within the fairgrounds has not changed since the reestablishment of the Western Montana Fair at its current site in 1913. Events associated with the fair include: horse racing, rodeos, musical performances, carnivals, open-air commercial displays, and agricultural, home arts, and crafts exhibits (including 4-H projects from many local clubs). In 2006 the county discontinued horse racing at the fairgrounds, however, the track remains in place.

During the remainder of the year, fair buildings are rented for income. As many are difficult to heat, during the winter months most are rented for storage. During the spring, summer, and early fall the fairground is host to many different exhibits. AKC sanctioned conformation and obedience trials, gun shows and commercial exhibits are among the events conducted at the fairgrounds. The stables and the race track are used for race horse training, and by college rodeo and roping performances.

A previously stated, the open area north of the exhibit buildings remains, and continues to be used for a variety of functions including as an unpaved parking area, and for open air exhibits such as carnivals and commercial trade fairs.

Virtually all activities conducted at the fairgrounds require automobile parking, and several areas are devoted to this use. A large part of the grounds east of the main interior access road, designated the East Lot, is available to patrons of the fair and other events, as are other areas within and adjacent to the exhibit building grid.

During the past decade some structural improvements have been added to the fairgrounds to accommodate new recreational and sporting events. These include the enclosed and open portions of the Glacier Ice Rink, which are used principally by the Missoula Area Youth Hockey Association (MAYHA) during the winter months. In addition, a small skateboard park and an associated parking area has been constructed in the southwest corner of the grounds. Although the ice rinks can be used for other more traditional fair events, the architectural character of the improvements is not compatible with the character of the historic era improvements. With the exception of the parking area, the skateboard park generally cannot be used for other purposes.

**Summary:** Current land uses and associated infrastructure mirror the historic use within the fairgrounds; exceptions include the recent additions to accommodate the two ice rinks and the skateboard park. The roughly three-acre open-air exhibit area and the two-acre informal parking area are counted as two contributing sites.

#### ***Circulation (1 Contributing structure)***

Between 1914 and the mid 1940s, circulation into and through the fairgrounds consisted of informal pathways with temporary demarcations for parking areas. Access onto the grounds was controlled by a perimeter fence which extended along South Avenue, Russell Street and Stephens Avenue and along a diagonal line parallel to the south side of the race track. Patrons entered the grounds through the main gate on South Avenue, located west of the current main gate, due north of the east end of the original agricultural building (B13).<sup>2</sup> A 1937 aerial photograph shows the main entrance flanked on either side by two-story frame towers that supported an arched signboard. The ticket booths shown on early Sanborn Fire Insurance maps were likely located in the ground floor of the support towers. Flagpoles topped the

<sup>2</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for City of Missoula, Sheet 73, 1921, 1951 and 1958.

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pyramidal roofs of the towers. Public parking occurred in a wide band along the north portion of the grounds just inside the main entrance (east of the fenced county shops), and in areas adjacent to the exhibit buildings. At this time, it appears that none of the roads and pathways were paved.

The existing circulation system within the fairgrounds reflects patterns established by the late 1940s or early 1950s, as documented in aerial photographs from that time. Currently, a chain link perimeter fence controls vehicular access into the site.<sup>3</sup> The primary vehicular access into the grounds continues to be from South Avenue, but, as stated above, slightly east of the original entrance. An opening in the perimeter fence is bordered on both sides by sign boards with brick bases, each of which supports a board sign lettered with "Western Montana Fair." Metal pipe columns straddle the entrance and support a modern sign board with the fair's logo (a graphic representation of the original agricultural building). From this entrance, an asphalt-surfaced road leads straight south then turns southwest and runs parallel to the north side of the race track to connect with Russell Avenue on the west side of the grounds. This road is named Fair Way.

Vehicles may also access the grounds through a gate in the fence on the east side of the grounds. This gate is located just south of B36 (a.k.a. the WPA building); from which point another asphalt road extends southwest to connect with Fair Way in front of Building 13 (the original Agricultural Building, currently known as the Commercial Building). Five other gates in the perimeter fence provide access to the grounds.

In addition to the through roads, a series of named streets defines the grid containing the exhibit buildings. Carnival Way is an internal road that runs east to west and forms the north boundary of the exhibit building cluster, separating it from the open air display area (known today as the Midway). Race Way and 3 Corners are both north-south oriented streets that intersect with Carnival Way on the north and with Fair Way on the south. Race Way forms the current west boundary of the historic building cluster, while 3 Corners divides the cluster into two 'blocks.' 3 Corners is a very wide lane accommodating food vendors during fair week and parking during periods when the grounds are used for other purposes. With the exception of the WPA building, which is located at the east edge of the fairgrounds, all of the buildings that date to the historical period are located within this grid. All of these streets as well as the area in front of the commercial building have asphalt paving, with traffic flow directed by painted arrows.

Although small parking areas are scattered throughout the grounds, the northeast corner of the open space, east of Fair Way is currently devoted to parking. Pre-cast concrete bollards mark the rows, in an otherwise open field.

Circulation features added after the end of the period of significance include the concrete path that leads north from Carnival Way to connect with the front door of the Home Arts Building, which was built in 1980. In addition, concrete pedestrian walks located adjacent to buildings that do not open directly onto the street grid are believed to be recent additions to the site. These include: the walks that lead to the entrances in the public restrooms (B19) and those that connect the two north-side entrances in the 4-H Café.

**Summary:** Although most of the vehicular circulation within the site (including through-roads, the exhibit building street grid and parking areas) has become more formal over the years, the underlying pattern of access has not changed since the 1940s, which is well within the period of significance identified for the fairgrounds. The vehicular circulation system, including through-roads and interior streets is counted as one contributing structural system.

### ***Buildings and Structures***

The buildings and structures associated with the Missoula County Fairgrounds date to several different periods of development and represent different styles of construction. Until a 1941 fire destroyed the grandstand and four other major buildings, the exhibit buildings and two race horse stables shared similar architectural style and detailing.

Missoula architect, Ole Bakke (perhaps with input from his partner, A. J. Gibson) designed most of the early buildings

<sup>3</sup> Note that the chain link fence is the latest in a series of perimeter fences built to control access into the site. It replaces an earlier post and wire fence in place by the late 1940s, which in turn replaced the original solid board fence built in 1915.

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using simplified Craftsman detailing in otherwise vernacular buildings. All were of frame construction, one or two-stories in height, with rustic or drop-lap siding on the exterior walls and wood shingle roofs. Clerestories, with distinctive jerkinhead ends ran the length of the larger buildings, and a few had pyramidal roof cupolas with wooden louver vents. Exposed rafter ends and heavy brackets at the eave line reflect the Craftsman styling which was popular in the second decade of the 1900s. Bakke-designed buildings constructed between 1914 and 1937 included the original grandstand and associated judges' stand, the original agricultural building, two race stables, a second agricultural building (added in 1937), a cattle stable, and a horse barn. The WPA building constructed in 1940 mirrored the hip on gable effect of the clearstories of the earlier buildings. Today, only two Bakke-designed exhibit buildings (B13 and B16), the race track, and the WPA building remain on site to represent the early development period.

For a variety of reasons, but mostly because of limited funding, buildings added to the site after the 1941 fire do not share the same cohesive design as the earlier buildings. Those added in the 1950s include the new grandstand and bleachers, at least two surplus 'temporary' barracks moved from the Alien Detention Camp at Fort Missoula, a new architect-designed public latrine made of pumice block (1951), and a large steel building at the western edge of the fairgrounds (1953). Post-historic period buildings added to the site include the concrete block Home Arts building, the frame Fine Arts and Floriculture buildings, as well as prefabricated metal buildings and trailers. The most recent additions include the large Grayco steel buildings that contain the indoor and outdoor Glacier ice rinks.

One of the elements that adds cohesiveness to the built environment within the fairgrounds is the uniform color scheme for the buildings, which includes white walls with light green trim. In addition, most of the buildings are roofed with green sheetmetal. The following descriptions of individual buildings are separated into two parts; the first includes the buildings directly associated with fair administration and exhibits and the second includes buildings and structures associated with the race track. Note that the building numbers used in the following narratives are taken from the most recent fairgrounds facilities map, updated in November of 2008.

## Fair Administration and Exhibits

**B4 Fair Office (1955 / Contributing building):** The fair office occupies one of two remaining barracks moved to the site from the Alien Detention Camp area at Fort Missoula in 1955. Beginning in 1933, "temporary" buildings of this kind were erected at CCC camps and later at military facilities like Fort Missoula throughout the United States. Prefabricated wood frame wall components could be connected and the seam covered on the exterior by a vertical batten.

The Fair Office is located adjacent to the south side of Fair Way Street, just north of the race track. This rectangular (66' X 20') one-story building has a side-gable roof covered with green steel sheet roofing. Exterior walls are covered with horizontal drop-lap siding with vertical battens covering the seams and corner board trim at the wall ends.

On the northwest (front) side of the building, vertical battens define 13 bays. This wall contains four pedestrian entries, one with an aluminum frame glass door, two with flush wood doors with one fixed light, and one with a wood panel door with one fixed light. Five window openings, all located in the north half of the building contain two large picture windows, and three nine-light hopper windows. The rear of the building contains a central entry with wooden panel door paired with a wood-frame screen door, and eight window openings with a variety of sashes. The northeast end contains three evenly spaced, nine-light hopper windows with wooden sashes; the southwest end contains two nine-light hopper windows.

**B5 Concession Row (1966 / Noncontributing building):** Building 5 is a rectangular (208' X 20') frame and steel building constructed in about 1966. Glue-lam beams support the shallow gable roof that is covered with metal roofing. The building is divided into seven 20' X 25' bays and two 12' X 20' bays, all of which are used for food concessions during the fair; some of the bays are used for storage during other times of the year. This building replaced a series of smaller, wood-frame vending kiosks that lined the north side of the race track.

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**B12 Floriculture Building (1959 / Contributing building):** The Floriculture Building is a rectangular (32' X 108'), one-story frame building, constructed on a concrete foundation wall. Built in 1959, it has a shallow, front-gable roof covered with green enameled steel roofing (applied in the 1990s), and exterior walls covered with aluminum siding. Double entries are centered in the east and west gable ends. Each entry contains a pair of flush steel doors with diamond-patterned lights. A concrete ramp with a metal pipe railing provides handicapped access at the west entry. A shallow lattice has been attached to the wall around the east side entry. The north and south sides each have four window openings that contain one-light, awning windows with wooden sash. A small shed roof addition for utilities is located towards the west end of the south wall.

**B13 Commercial Building; original Agricultural Building (1915 / Contributing building):** Ole Bakke designed this heavy timber post and beam building in 1915. Measuring 180' X 50', the original agricultural building is the largest of the historic-era buildings remaining on site. Its position within the exhibit buildings, as well as its height, makes it a dominant focal point within the grounds. The structure is built with braced vertical 6" X 6" posts set 12 feet apart on concrete footings. It is a full two stories with a clerestory running the length of the building. The gable roofs have exposed rafter ends and the overhanging eaves at the gable ends are supported by Craftsman-style knee brackets made with 4" X 6" and 6" X 6" dimensional lumber. The gable roof of the clerestory has jerkinhead ends.

Two wooden cupolas (which originally contained wooden louvers) top the clerestory roof, one near each end of the building. In 1967 the west cupola was modified to serve as a 'security office.' Modifications included replacing the wooden louvers with wooden window sash with multiple lights, and construction of a wooden ladder to reach the cupola on the south wall. The original louvers in the east cupola are covered with painted canvas which mimics the appearance of fixed windows. Each cupola is topped with a square wooden mast.<sup>4</sup>

Original exterior finishing materials included horizontal drop-lap siding on the walls (with vertical corner boards) and sawn wood shingles on the roof. However, metal siding has been applied to the south wall and both ends of the building; the current roof covering green enameled metal roofing was applied in the 1990s.

The east and west ends of the agricultural building each contain a central double entry in the first floor level, with a pair of cross-braced wooden doors. A large arched window opening with 20 fixed lights extends from the upper half of the second story into the clerestory. As originally designed, both ends of the building contained two six-light windows at the second story, one on each side of the large arched window. Post-construction modifications include the installation of wooden vents beneath the jerkin ends on both the east and west sides. Additionally, on the east end a double set of wooden stairs leads to a landing at the second story, where two new pedestrian entries have been added on either side of the central arched window. The stairs and the entries were added in the 1980s. On the first story, a small counter window protected by a shed-roofed overhang and a pedestrian entry have been cut in the north end of the east elevation. A concrete ramp with a metal pipe railing has been added to the west entrance.

On the north and south sides the wall surface is broken by two, 12'-wide projecting entry bays that extend the full two stories. The bays are located roughly 24' in from each end, and have front-gable roofs that intersect with the slope of the main volume. Like the roof of the main volume, the gable roofs have exposed rafter ends and brackets at the eave line. Fenestration in the projecting bays includes a ten-light fixed window located high in the first story and an arched window opening with 15 fixed lights in the second story. In the early 1990s, an information window was added in the projection at the east end of the south wall.

Fenestration in the side walls of the main volume includes ten evenly spaced window openings and a centered pedestrian entry in the first floor, and eleven window openings in the second story. The window openings are located near the tops of the walls and contain six-light wooden sashes. The openings have plain board trim and sills, with drip caps above. As originally designed, the centered side entries had six-light transoms above the doors, however on the north side the transom has been filled in. On the south side, the entry has been enclosed by a shed-roofed vestibule. Both the north and

<sup>4</sup> The original building plans indicate that Bakke envisioned flagpoles atop the cupola vent.

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south walls of the clerestory contain thirteen rectangular window openings, each with a ribbon of three, six-light wooden sashes.

The interior of this building is open to the clerestory level. Two sets of wooden stairs, one at each end of the building lead from the first floor to a second story gallery that runs around the inside perimeter of the building. The gallery has a simple wooden balustrade. Wooden partitions affixed to the exterior walls divide the gallery into separate display areas—each with an exterior window. The interior walls are covered with one-inch sheathing applied horizontally over the studs.

**B14 Security (1973 / Noncontributing building):** The security building is a small, rectangular (16' X 24'), one-story, frame building with a cross-gable roof, built on a concrete foundation. Built by the county reserve deputies in 1973, the building is covered on the exterior with vertical T1-11 plywood siding and has a cross-gable roof covered with green asphalt shingles. A wooden deck on the front (north) wall leads to an entry with a paneled steel door. The building contains fixed and sliding windows in aluminum frames.

**B15 Fine Arts Building (1964 / Noncontributing building):** The Fine Arts Building is located adjacent to the north side of B13. Built in 1964, it is a rectangular (44' X 94') one-story frame building constructed on a concrete foundation wall. It has a shallow front-gable roof covered with green enameled steel roofing, and aluminum siding on the exterior walls. Double entries are centered in the east and west gable ends. The east entry contains a pair of flush steel doors with diamond-patterned lights, while the west entry has a pair of glass doors. One light awning windows are located high on the wall on either side of the west entrance. In addition, a large two-light aluminum-sash sliding window has been added to at the north end of the wall. On the north side, five one-light awning windows occur singly and in pairs, and a large one-by one light sliding window is located at the west end of the wall. The south side of the building contains five, one-light awning windows.

**B16 Culinary/Agricultural Building (1937 / Contributing building):** This building is similar to B13. Although no plans have been located for the structure it shares the design characteristics of the other buildings designed by Ole Bakke. Built in 1937, it is a rectangular (50' X 100') heavy timber post and beam building constructed on a concrete pier foundation. It is a full two stories with a clerestory running the length of the building. The building has exposed rafter ends and Craftsman-style brackets support the overhanging eaves at the gable ends. The gable roof of the clerestory has jerkinhead ends. The original drop-lap siding on the exterior walls has been covered with metal siding, and the roof is covered with green enameled steel roofing.

Both the east and west ends of the building contain original ground floor entries with a pair of wooden cross-braced doors below three fixed lights. On the exterior, double wooden stairways lead to a landing in front of a single entry at the second story, reportedly added in the 1970s. Long rectangular window openings above the second floor entries contain five, four-light fixed wooden sashes. Wooden vents are located directly above these window openings.

The north and south sides have identical fenestration, consisting of seven evenly spaced window openings located high on the wall at the first and second story level. Each opening originally contained a six-light wooden sash, although some are missing—the void filled with plywood. The exterior walls of the clerestory have eight rectangular window openings, each with three, six-light, wooden sashes.

**B17 Media Arts Building (1995 / Noncontributing building):** The Media Arts Building, built in 1995, is a rectangular (20' X 60'), one-story prefabricated metal structure with a shallow gable roof constructed on a concrete foundation wall. Exterior walls and the roof are covered with wide ribbed metal siding. The front (east) wall has a double entry centered beneath the gable end that contains a pair of glazed aluminum doors. The rear (west wall) of the building has a steel door adjacent to the south end.

**B18 4-H Exhibit Building (1955 / Contributing building):** Building 18 is one of two remaining internment barracks moved to the fairgrounds from Fort Missoula in 1955. It is a one-story rectangular building (20' X 100') with a shallow

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gable roof that has been placed on a concrete foundation wall. The exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim and vertical battens covering the wall seams. The east and west gable ends each contain a central entry flanked on either side by a window opening with a nine-light wooden hopper sash. Window openings above the entries contain two six-light wooden sashes. The two side elevations each contain ten, evenly spaced window openings placed near the top of the wall. These openings contain nine-light wooden hopper sash and have plain board trim.

**B19 Public Latrine (1951, modified 1968 and 1974 / Noncontributing building):** The public latrine is located directly south of B18. The original component was built in 1951 from plans drawn by Fox and Ballas, however, two additions (added in about 1968 and 1974 respectively), more than double the original volume. Currently, the building measures 28' X 80'. The original volume is a one-story rectangular structure built on concrete footings. The shed roof has exposed, 4" X 10" rafters with beveled ends placed on 4' centers, covered with 2" X 6" tongue and groove decking and finally with three-ply built-up roofing. The walls consist of pumice blocks with a concrete brick header course every second row.

As originally designed, men's and women's entries were recessed at opposite ends of the building, behind a screen of vertical wooden slats. The front of the building had a wooden louver vent (with wire screen inside) centered in the wall. Window openings on either side of the vent were to contain two wooden sashes with wire glass. The central vent and the original window east of the vent remain. The rear of the building had a central entry with a vertical board door containing a screened opening. This entry probably led to a plumbing alley or perhaps a storage area. Louvered vents were located high on the wall on either side of the rear door.

The addition on the west end of the original volume is of concrete block construction but lacks the brick header course of the original. The roof structure mirrors that of the original with exposed rafters, smaller than those in the original volume and spaced closer together. The front of the addition contains two window openings, both with metal sash—one with six lights and one with four lights. There are two entries in the addition, one to the handicapped restrooms and one to the women's restrooms. These entrances along with a new entrance cut in the front of the original component, all have plywood privacy screens in front.

Although the original component of this building dates to the historical period, modifications have compromised its historical integrity and it is counted as a noncontributing resource.

**B20 Fair Center Building (1973 / Noncontributing building):** The Fair Center is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Fair Way and 3 Corners streets. Constructed in 1973, this one-story prefabricated building measures roughly 36' X 51' and is constructed on a concrete foundation. The flat roof is covered with standing seam metal. The exterior walls are covered with vertical wide rib metal siding. Window openings throughout the building contain one-over-one-light double-hung metal sashes.

Recessed porches are located at either end of the southwest wall. The edges of the roofed overhang are supported by a single vertical post. Each porch contains a south-facing entrance with a flush steel door with one fixed light. Two window openings, each with a one-over-one-light double hung window are located in the opposite porch wall. The southwest wall between the porches contains two windows. North of the porch, the southeast wall contains a flush steel door in the middle of the wall. North of the west porch, the northwest wall has an entry with a flush steel door in the middle of the wall. The northwest (rear) wall contains four window openings.

**B22 4-H Café (1930s / Contributing building):** The 4-H Café is located south of B16. Believed to have been built in the 1930s, this is a one-story frame building with a shed roof constructed on a concrete foundation. Its rectangular plan is modified by a shed roof addition on the rear (south) wall. The exterior walls are covered with horizontal drop lap siding with vertical corner board trim and the roof is covered with rolled asphalt roofing. Door and window openings throughout the building have plain board trim. The front (north) wall contains two entries at opposite ends of the wall. The west wall has one window opening with a three-light wooden sash, protected on the exterior by a fixed wooden awning.

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**B24 Enclosed Rink (1990s / Noncontributing building):** The enclosed ice rink is a large, rectangular (140' X 208'), one and one-half story Grayco steel building with a shallow gable roof. The exterior walls are covered with horizontal wide-rib metal siding with a horizontal belt course marking the top of the first story. The roof is covered with enameled metal siding. The south and east walls each have a set of double aluminum frame glass doors.

**B26 Open Rink (2004 / Noncontributing building):** The open rink is located directly adjacent to the north end of B24. This is a large rectangular, open-sided structure built on a concrete slab. It has a shallow gable roof covered with green enameled metal.

**B32 Butler Barn (early 1950s / Noncontributing building)** The Butler Barn is located between the ice rinks and the west boundary of the fairgrounds is a one-story, rectangular building constructed on a concrete foundation. The exterior walls and the shallow gable roof are covered with wide ribbed steel panels. The north wall contains a large machine opening in the center of the wall (with a metal overhead door) and a pedestrian entry with a double steel door in the west half of the wall. The west side has a central pedestrian entry and two small window openings located towards the north end of the wall. This building, which may date to the historical period, has been incorporated into the adjacent ice rink and now serves as the storage for the Zambonis used to groom the ice.

Although this building may be the steel building erected at the fair in the early 1950s, it has been modified repeatedly and incorporated into the ice rink complex, so that it appears as an extension of that complex. Because of the modifications, it is counted as a noncontributing resource.

**B34 Llama Barn (1988 / Noncontributing building):** The Llama Barn, located in the northwest corner of the fairgrounds was constructed over a three-year period beginning in 1988. It is a rectangular (70' X 100'), two-story, steel building constructed on a concrete slab. Both the exterior walls and roof are covered with wide-ribbed steel panels. The east and west elevations each have two garage door openings with overhead metal doors, one at each end of the wall. The north and south walls each have a large opening to accommodate machinery or equipment in the east end of the wall. These full-height openings are covered with doors that slide on exterior rails.

**B35 Home Arts Building (1980 / Noncontributing building):** The Missoula Area Round and Square Dance Association (MARSDA) paid for the construction of this building in 1980. It is a rectangular (60' X 90'), one-story concrete block building with a shallow gable roof covered with green enameled metal roofing. The gable ends are covered with T1-11 plywood siding. On the front (south) and rear (north) walls, two concrete block pilasters extend from the foundation to the top of the wall dividing the elevations into three bays. On the front wall, the central bay contains a double entry, with a pair of flush steel doors. Pilasters divide the east and west sides of the building into five bays. A second entrance is located in the north half of the east wall—protected by a gable roof vestibule. The west wall contains a shed-roofed lean-to addition, enclosed with T1-11 plywood.

**B36 Maintenance Shop, WPA Building (1940 / Contributing building):** This building, constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1940, is of wood frame construction with a U-shaped plan. The main block at the bottom of the U has a double hipped roof, with a center portion that rises about six feet above the main roof. Two short, gable roof wings extend from the east and west ends of the north side of the main block to complete the U. The exterior walls are covered with wooden clapboards with vertical boards at the corners. Original window openings contain eight-over-eight-light, double-hung wooden sashes, with board trim and sills and drip caps above.

The south (rear) wall originally contained five, evenly spaced window openings each with a pair of windows. The western-most window has been replaced with an overhead garage door and a pedestrian entry. Original windows at the east end of the building have been covered by a small shed-roof green-house addition and by a shed-roof awning. Several original window openings beneath the awning have been boarded over. The north wall of the main block contains four garage door openings with metal overhead doors and a pedestrian entry at the east end adjacent to the junction point with the east wing.

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In the east wing, the north wall contains a central opening with a pair of original double-hung windows. A shed-roofed overhang is attached to the east wall of the east wing, and several of the original windows are boarded over. The west wall has a pedestrian door at the north end, and two original windows.

In the west wing, the north wall also has a pair of original windows centered beneath the gable end. The inside (east) wall has an original garage door opening adjacent to the junction with the main block; the west side contains five original window openings and a new opening with one fixed light.

**Soroptimists Bingo Kiosk (Circa 1960 / Noncontributing structure):** This is a small rectangular structure with a shed roof. Exterior walls are covered with lapped board siding and the roof is covered with green enameled metal. The southwest, southeast and northeast sides of the building have openings with removable wooden shutters above a narrow counter. Wooden benches line these sides of the building. An entry at the east edge of the northwest wall with a metal door provides access to the interior.

**American Legion Bingo Kiosk (Date of construction unknown / Noncontributing structure):** The American Legion Bingo Kiosk is located adjacent to the south side of B16. This small frame structure has a central interior room accessed from a wooden door in the rear (west) wall. The shallow gable roof has a small cupola vent with a pyramidal roof and is covered with rolled asphalt roofing. The south, east and north sides of the building have openings with removable plywood shutters. The openings are lined with counter tops with wooden bench seats below. A sign board with the words, "The American Legion," is affixed to the top of the east wall beneath the gable end.

### Race Track and Associated Improvements

**Race Track (1914 / Contributing structure):** Built in 1914, the half-mile race track is roughly 60 feet wide, banked on the outside edges of the turns and the south straightaway to a height of about five feet. Including the area inside the oval track, this structure incorporates roughly 12 acres of land or about a quarter of the area devoted to the fairgrounds. The oval track has a guard rail on the inside and outside edges formed with metal pipe and rails, with openings at several points that facilitate vehicular access to the area inside the track (the infield). Both the track and infield are made of graded mineral soil. The infield can be graded for motocross and other temporary events. The infield can also be modified for rodeo events such as the Missoula Stampede. Facilities inside the track include the Announcer's Stand as well as a variety of trailers and fenced areas—depending upon the event being undertaken. The area directly in front of the grandstand and bleachers is used for the rodeo grounds and also is the location of the stage during other performances.

**B6 Pari-Mutual Annex (1969 / Noncontributing building):** Grounds Foreman, Don Torganrud, built this 12' X 120' structure in 1969.<sup>5</sup> It is of wood frame construction with plywood walls and a flat roof covered with corrugated metal. The front (northwest) wall contains a series of small betting windows above a shallow counter. The area in front of the windows is sheltered by a free-standing awning. Entries with flush wood doors are located in the two ends of the building.

**B7 Beer Garden (1964 / Noncontributing building):** The Beer Garden consists of a 10' X 20' metal-sided building with a flat roof at the west end of a 40' X 45' covered area. Probably built in 1964, the east wall of the building has three counter bays that are closed with plywood shutters during the off season.

**B8 Race Paddock and Associated buildings (1930s, 1997/ One Contributing building, two Noncontributing buildings, one Noncontributing structure):** The Race Paddock, adjacent to the east side of the Fair Office consists of a series of saddling stalls, a tack room and two jockey rooms. These buildings and structures form an L at the north and

<sup>5</sup> List of Fair Ground Buildings 1995 by Sam Yewusiak (Fair Manager), Office of the Western Montana Fair, Missoula County Fairgrounds, Missoula.

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east sides of the race paddock, while the west and south sides are enclosed with plastic fencing. Of these, the saddling stalls and the tack room likely date to the historic period, although the saddling stalls have been repeatedly modified by the application of modern materials. The Anaconda Job Corps built the two jockey rooms in 1997.

The saddling stalls line the north side of the race paddock. This rectangular (10' X 80') shed-roofed frame structure is supported by a massive concrete retaining wall, modified as recently as the 1980s. Above the retaining wall, the west, north, and east walls are enclosed with metal siding. The south wall is open. The interior is divided into nine stalls by low board walls; a feed bunk lines the inside wall. The saddling stalls are counted as a noncontributing structure.

The tack shed (a contributing building) forms part of the east side of the Race Paddock. Believed to date to the 1930s, this is a one-story, rectangular (10' X 52') frame building with a shed roof covered with green enameled metal roofing. Exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim. The front (west) wall has an entry with a five-panel wooden door at the south end, and two, six-light wooden-sash hopper windows, one at the north end and one north of the entry. The tack shed is counted as a contributing building.

The two jockey rooms (both noncontributing buildings) are both small, one-story frame buildings with front-gable roofs, built on concrete piers. The exterior walls are covered with vertical T1-11 plywood siding, and the roofs are covered with green asphalt shingles. Both jockey rooms are noncontributing.

**B9 Pari-Mutual Betting Plaza (1963 / Noncontributing building):** The Pari-Mutual betting plaza consists of a 20' X 108' building with an adjacent 40'x 108' flat-roofed canopy—both built in 1963. The building is constructed on a massive concrete foundation and has a flat roof. Vertical wide ribbed metal siding covers the walls and green enameled metal covers the roof. Windows are mostly one-by-one-light sliding sashes.

The south wall of the building contains a bank of betting windows; entries with flush wooden doors are located at both ends of this wall. The north wall contains seven window openings and two entries, the latter accessed from concrete stoops with metal pipe railings. A single window opening is centered in the east end.

**B10 Bleachers Section F-I (1951 / Contributing structure):** These uncovered bleachers measure 41' X 117' and are located adjacent to the east side of the grandstand, facing the track. Originally built in 1951, the structure consists of welded and bolted steel pipe segments with diagonal pipe bracing. The rear and sides of the structure are enclosed with white corrugated metal. The bench seats have fiberglass covers.

**B11 Grandstand Section A-H (1954 / Contributing structure):** The covered grandstand measures 41' X 219' and contains 19 rows of seats. Originally built in 1954, the structure has a concrete foundation wall that supports the welded and bolted steel pipe framework. The roof is supported by eleven steel trusses, each of which supports one glue-lam rafter. A VIP booth is located atop the grandstand, and a steward's box is located west of center near the bottom of the stands,

**B38 Announcer's Stand (circa 1970 / Noncontributing building):** The Announcer's Stand is located inside the race track. Built in the late 1960s or early 1970s, this is a 12' X 16' frame building, constructed on an elevated tower. The walls are covered with T1-11 plywood siding and the flat roof with ribbed metal. The three window bays in the north elevation contain plywood shutters, while the bays on the east and west sides contain fixed lights. Steel ladders at the east and west ends of the rear wall lead to the entry.

**H1 Horse stable (1914 modified circa 2000 / Noncontributing building):** This one-story, wood frame stable is located adjacent to the east boundary fence. This barn may have been built as early as 1914, and originally contained 29 bays in the west wall, 28 of which contained horse stalls with a tack room at the north end. Recently, the south half of the building was razed and the south wall left open to the elements. The north and east walls are enclosed with drop-lap siding and the shed roof is covered with metal roofing.

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**H2 and H-3 Horse stables (Circa 1940 / Contributing buildings):** H2 (built in the late 1930s or early 1940s) and H3 (built prior to 1937) are both wood frame buildings with gable roofs built on concrete foundations. The exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim and the roofs are covered with corrugated metal. In H2, the two side elevations are divided into thirteen bays, each side contains a tack room and 12 stalls. In H3, the side elevations are divided into 24 bays, for a total of 48 stalls. The stall bays of both buildings contain wooden, double-leaf doors. Exterior openings to the stalls contain double-leaf doors.

**H4 Horse stable (1914 / Contributing building):** H4 is a rectangular, one-story frame building with a shed roof built on a concrete foundation wall. Its estimated date of construction is 1914. Exterior walls are covered with drop-lap siding with vertical corner board trim, and the roof is covered with corrugated metal. The northwest side of the building is divided into 25 bays; including 24 horse stalls and a tack room. Each of the bays originally contained a double-leaf wooden door however the upper leaf is missing from several of the bays.

**H7, H8, and H9 Horse stables (1960s / Noncontributing buildings):** H7, H8 and H9 are all prefabricated steel buildings with gable roofs, built in the early 1960s. The exterior walls and the roofs are covered with wide ribbed metal panels. H7 and H8 are sited end-to-end, the buildings separated by only a few feet. In all three buildings, each side wall is divided into fifteen bays that correspond to horse stalls. The stalls have double-leaf (dutch) doors made of plywood.

**H12 Horse stables (1960s / Noncontributing building):** Reportedly built in the 1960s, H12 is the only remaining building of three identical horse stables; H10 and H11 were removed sometime after 2004. H12 is a long rectangular frame building with a gable roof, built on a concrete foundation. An alley bisects the building into two parts. The exterior walls are covered with plain board siding of various widths. Openings to 24 stalls line each side of the building; each opening contains the lower leaf of a double leaf door.

**H19 Backfield Restroom (Not known, after 1958, Noncontributing building):** H19 is a small frame restroom located between the stables and the race track. It is a one-story frame building with a gable roof, exterior walls are covered with T1-11 plywood and the roof has green asphalt shingles.

### ***Vegetation***

During the period of significance the fairgrounds contained minimal landscaping. Ornamental vegetation was limited to grass in the open-air exhibit areas and in some parts of the race track and the backfield. Exceptions include rows of shade trees adjacent to the north and west perimeter fences.

It was not until the 1960s or 1970s that shade trees were added to areas adjacent to some exhibit buildings. Today, ornamental trees (Lombardy poplar, several varieties of maple and some ornamental fruit trees), are found in several areas adjacent to the central exhibit building cluster, in the vicinity of the race track, and adjacent to the shop (B36). In addition, a deciduous hedge lines the inside of the north perimeter fence and along the west side of Fair Way.

**Summary:** With the exception of grass lawns in the open-air exhibit and parking areas, most of the ornamental vegetation currently present at the fairgrounds has been added after the period of significance.

### ***Small-scale features***

A variety of small-scale features are found throughout the fairgrounds. Included among them are fencing, lamp standards, ornamental planters, signs, short segments of concrete pavement and ticket booths. Virtually all of the existing signage as well as fencing materials are modern, as are the brick planters scattered throughout the grounds. A modern reduced scale replica of the Statue of Liberty (located just north of B13) is a modern addition as well. The ticket booths are small, portable buildings not large enough to document individually and do not contribute to or detract from the historic appearance of the fairgrounds. These small scale features were not included in the resource count.

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Only the lamp standards, found in several areas within the grounds, appear to date to the period of significance. These features occur along the south boundary of the open-air exhibit area, along the vehicular road south of the shop (B36) and in front of the Commercial Building (B13). Most of the lamp standards consist of simple metal poles some of which are topped with ball finials. Light fixtures (both lanterns and exposed bulbs with awning-style covers) are suspended from the single mast arms that extend from the poles. The shape of the arms vary (bull arms predominate), and most are anchored to the pole with curved metal braces.

The two standards in front of B13 are slightly more elaborate than those found in other areas. They consist of a plain metal pole set on a flared base. Light fixtures with green enameled-metal awning-style shades are attached to the single, U-shaped mast arm that extends from the pole. Metal scroll work connects the arm with the pole. These lamp standards are believed to have been moved to the fairgrounds from Fort Missoula.

Summary: Of the numerous small-scale features currently located within the fairgrounds, only the lamp standards appear to date to the period of significance.

**Integrity:** The Missoula County Fairgrounds possesses integrity of location, materials, workmanship, design, feeling and association. The underlying organization of space within the grounds as well as circulation and land use, reflect the period of significance. As the first improvement to be built at the grounds, the race track is a very important contributing structure; its position influenced all future development. The half-mile race track occupies nearly a quarter of the fairgrounds total acreage and has been altered little since its construction in 1914. Similarly, the open space at the north end of the grounds continues to be used for its original purposes (parking and open-air exhibits), and remains largely free of improvements. The exhibit building cluster continues to be dominated by the two remaining Bakke-designed buildings (B13 and B16), and, although some modern materials have been added to the exteriors, they retain their essential significant architectural characteristics. Their comparatively large scale gives them prominence in the exhibit building cluster. The iconic character of the original Agricultural Building (B13) is exemplified in its use in the current Western Montana Fair logo, which features a graphic representation of this building. Finally, although the number of noncontributing resources outnumbers the contributing resources, the former are overwhelmingly minor in scale and do not detract from the overall historical appearance of the fairgrounds.

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### Summary of Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

<b>Contributing Buildings (11)</b>	<b>Noncontributing Buildings (23)</b>
B4 Fair Office	B5 Concession Row
B8 Tack Shed	B6 Pari-mutual Annex
B12 Floriculture Building	B7 Beer Garden
B13 Commercial Building (original Agricultural Building)	B8 Race Paddock Jockey's Room
B16 Culinary Arts Building (original Agricultural Annex)	B8 Race Paddock Jockey's Rooms
B18 4-H Building (barracks moved from Fort Missoula in 1955)	B9 Pari-Mutual Plaza
B22 4-H Cafe	B14 Security Building
B36 Shop (WPA Building)	B15 Fine Arts Building
H2 Horse Stable	B17 Media Arts Building
H3 Horse Stable	B19 Public Restrooms
H4 Horse Stable	B20 Fair Center
	B24 Enclosed rink
	B26 Open rink
	B32 Butler Barn
	B34 Llama Barn
	B35 Home Arts Building (MARSDA Dance Hall)
	B38 Announcer's Stand
	H1 Horse Stable
	H7 Horse Stable
	H8 Horse Stables
	H9 Horse Stables
	H12 Horse Stable
	H19 Backfield Restrooms
<b>Contributing Sites (2)</b>	<b>Noncontributing Sites (None)</b>
Open-air exhibit area	
Parking area	
<b>Contributing Structures (4)</b>	<b>Noncontributing Structures (3)</b>
Vehicular circulation system	B8 Race Paddock Saddling Stalls
Race Track	American Legion Bingo Kiosk
B10 Bleachers	Soroptimist's Bingo Kiosk
B11 Grandstand	

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

COMMERCE

### Period of Significance

1914 - 1960

### Significant Dates

1914, 1937

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Bakke, Ole, architect

Fox and Ballas, architects

Pew, Charles H., builder

Elliot Construction Company, builder

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1914 (the date of completion and use of the first fairgrounds improvements) and extends through 1960, the end of the historical period as defined by the National Register. Although there have been periods of inactivity when either economics or politics precluded the presentation of the yearly fair, throughout the period of significance the fairgrounds and associated infrastructure remained intact, ready to serve as the fair venue when conditions improved.

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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Missoula County Fairgrounds is eligible for listing under National Register criterion A, under the “Commerce” and “Entertainment/Recreation” areas of significance. For nearly a century, the Missoula County Fairgrounds have hosted the Western Montana Fair, with exhibits and displays designed to promote area agriculture and commerce. Since the beginning, fair activities have included entertainment and recreational events (rodeos, horse racing and performances) intended to draw people to participate in the annual gathering. In addition, the Fairgrounds is host to a wide variety of entertainment and commercial activities throughout the spring, summer and fall. People are drawn from all over the region to commercial and entertainment events like trade shows, auto events, horse shows and sporting events. Offsite commercial impacts include retail sales, hospitality and food service. Although the fair has been vulnerable to nation-wide economic and political factors, the tradition of an annual fair, grounded in agriculture and home arts, and supplemented with recreational and entertainment opportunities, remains strong in the community.

The district is also eligible under criterion C, for the architectural merit of its original buildings, designed by Ole Bakke. Protégé and partner of noted Missoula architect, A. J. Gibson, Bakke designed many of Missoula’s landmark buildings. His body of work and that of his later partner and successor H. E. Kirkemo, can be found in residential, commercial and civic infrastructure throughout Montana. The Craftsman style of the original Agricultural Building and the Agricultural Annex (B13 and B16) at the Missoula County Fairgrounds, although built for purposes of display, hearkens back to the agricultural roots of the Missoula community.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**General Context: the tradition of community fairs**

In an increasingly urban country, state and county fairs represent the rural and agricultural society of the United States. Since the nineteenth century, established fairs have educated and entertained thousands of rural participants across the country, challenged them through competition, and drawn them together through social experiences. The attractions fairs present also have attracted people from urban walks of life, introducing them to elements of rural society. By educating and entertaining a wide variety of audiences, these fairs connect Americans to a long history of agriculture.

Fairs have been part of harvest periods and celebrations since prehistoric times. Although fairs are now considered chiefly social activities, they originated as commercial activities in Europe and other areas of the world.<sup>6</sup> As early as the eighth century, fairs offering goods for sale or trade developed along European trade routes. Often associated with churches or governing bodies, these fairs developed their own regulations, systems of weights and measurements, and means of inspection.<sup>7</sup> Medieval fairs often focused on particular commodities including livestock or cloth for sale, and included entertainments for those attending. As shop keeping developed, the importance of these fairs to consumers lost importance and the fairs became less commercial and more social.<sup>8</sup>

**County Fairs in America**

<sup>6</sup> Cornelius Walrod, *Fairs, Past and Present: A Chapter in the History of Commerce* (London: Elliot Stock, 1883), p. x.

<sup>7</sup> Julie A. Avery, “What is American About American Fairs?” in Julie A. Avery, ed., *Agricultural Fairs in America: Tradition, Education, Celebration* (Michigan State University Museum on behalf of the FairTime Project, 2000), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> John McCarrey, *County Fairs: Where America Meets*, photographs by Randy Olson (Washington, D. C.]: National Geographic Society, 1997, p. 10.

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Agricultural fairs in America have their roots in these early trade fairs and in European agricultural societies developed to allow wealthy landowners to share information and experimentation. In New Amsterdam in the 1620s, Dutch settlers in America instituted two fall fairs, one to sell cattle and one to sell hogs. The fairs also included entertainments and competitions.<sup>9</sup> Elkanah Watson, an eighteenth century Massachusetts farmer and businessman, is credited with beginning the county agricultural fair movement in the United States through his work in developing the Berkshire fairs. In 1784, he exhibited his two Merino sheep in the town square of his home town of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The enthusiasm of the audience inspired him to ponder the potential success of larger scale events. After his retirement from farming, he joined twenty-six others in presenting an exhibition in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1810. The event was repeated the following year, highlighted by a procession of sixty-nine oxen pulling a plough guided by the county's oldest man, primitive floats pulled by additional oxen, and a band. By the third year, Watson had established a women's day at the fair, encouraging their exhibition of domestic products and handiwork. The annual Berkshire fairs, conducted by the Berkshire Agricultural Society which was established in 1811, are considered the earliest county fairs in the United States. They eventually included demonstrations, lectures, and competitive comparisons of agricultural and domestic products. Prizes—also called premiums—highlighted the early Berkshire Fairs, when owners of livestock judged the top of their class were awarded silver cups or tableware. The fair that Watson founded helped to set the standard for American agricultural fairs.<sup>10</sup> In the meantime, the U. S. government also contributed to the interest in agricultural fairs. In 1804, the U. S. Patent Office began holding fairs that sold livestock and other agricultural products as well as manufactured goods and provided educational exhibits and demonstrations.<sup>11</sup> The establishment of agricultural societies in the eastern United States during the early 1800s, principally by well-to-do owners of large farms, further encouraged fairs. Agricultural society members compared farming methods and developed programs to learn about innovations in machinery and techniques, and this interest in sharing information and promoting education encouraged the development of agricultural fairs in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

The mid-1800s are considered the golden era of agricultural fairs. The number of agricultural societies in the United States increased dramatically during that period, and the events they encouraged and sponsored provided a place for members and other farm families to exhibit agricultural and domestic products, gave them opportunities for education and sharing of information, and provided an avenue for them to learn about innovations in agriculture and farm home life. They also provided a setting for appreciation of the domestic arts through displays of needlework, crafts, woodworking, and other examples of domestic handmade products.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, development of innovative mechanical equipment began to transform agriculture. The reaper, the thresher, the combine, and other labor-saving machines attracted the attention of farmers who were drawn to the idea of reducing the laborious demands of farming through mechanization. Fairs were the ideal venue for presenting these new inventions to them.<sup>14</sup>

### Entertainment at county fairs

The fairs also provided a means of socialization and entertainment, allowing fair-goers to relax, enjoy themselves, and meet one another. Some entertainments and competition, such as plowing matches, were related to farming. Wrestling matches, foot races, parades, musical presentations and other entertainments became popular as fairs evolved. Eventually, professional entertainers and carnivals became an important part of county and state fairs. Carnivals originated as early Christian holidays that preceded Lent and grew in popularity through the Middle Ages. In the United States, Phineas T. Barnum was responsible for developing the itinerant "carnival" into a major business. By 1900, traveling carnivals began to be a mainstay of state and county fairs, often featuring exciting rides, especially the colorful carousel. They also included "freak shows" in which men swallowed knives, manipulated snakes, or showed off unusual physical characteristics and "girlie shows" in which women in colorful costumes danced to provocative music. In

<sup>9</sup> McCarrey, *County Fairs*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup> Avery, "What is American About American Fairs?", p. 12. McCrarrey, *County Fairs*, pp. 15, 17, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Avery, "What is American About American Fairs?" p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Avery, "What is American About American Fairs?" p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Avery, "What is American About American Fairs?" p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Von Bernuth, Robert D., "The Role of Agricultural Fairs in Agricultural Innovation," in Julie A. Avery, ed., *Agricultural Fairs in America: Tradition, Education, Celebration* (Michigan State University Museum on behalf of the FairTime Project, 2000), pp. 51-53.

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addition, the carnivals provided food that seemed exotic to fairgoers and games of chance that offered them opportunities to win prizes. The carnivals brought some of the excitement and color of the outside world—although in an exaggerated form—to rural residents who had few opportunities to experience those excitements in other ways.<sup>15</sup>

### **Horse racing at fairs**

Horse racing became one of the main entertainments at local fairs. Mounted horse racing and chariot racing were important competitions in the Greek Olympics as early as 639 B.C. Horse racing and horse breeding in England became prevalent in the 1700s and the establishment of the Jockey Club in 1750 resulted in rules and regulations governing the sport and led to the development of the thoroughbred lineage.<sup>16</sup> Informal, spontaneous horse racing was a popular pastime among early citizens of America, and eventually led to a more structured sport. The first formal racetrack on the continent was probably laid out on Long Island in the mid-1660s. In 1745, the governor of Maryland oversaw the first organized race at Annapolis. The Revolutionary War impeded the development of horse racing and the horse breeding business in America, but it resurged in the southern states during the early nineteenth century. The Civil War also affected the growth of the industry, but after 1870 the development of horse-racing as a spectator sport and as a business grew rapidly.<sup>17</sup>

At fairs, horse races often began as casual competitions outside the fairgrounds, and the establishment of institutionalized racing within the boundaries of the fairgrounds sometimes caused controversy. By the 1870s, horse racing was very popular at fairs and fairgrounds that often included formal racetracks. Many people began attending fairs solely because of the horse-racing and other entertainments.<sup>18</sup>

### **Evolution of county fairs after the Civil War**

During the late 1800s, fairs became larger and more standardized. Jay Ford Laning played an important role in the development of agricultural fairs during this period. A native of New London, Ohio, Laning became a lawyer and was particularly active in the development of rural educational systems by the 1870s. He also participated in an agricultural society and assisted in organizing fairs. In 1881 he formed the Fair Printing Company of New London, Ohio and published a book about managing agricultural fairs. Laning recommended a committee system for administration of fairs and suggested parameters for the organization of exhibition divisions and classes. He also gave specific suggestions for the development of permanent fairgrounds, including buildings for exhibitions and competitions. An area for racing and other events, he advised, could provide dual purposes: entertaining the fairgoers and raising money by charging them admission to the special events. Laning also suggested a wide variety of activities to encourage people to attend fairs on successive days and noted that vendors offering snacks, lunches, and novelties provided convenience and additional entertainment to fair-goers.<sup>19</sup> The structure Laning recommended bears a strong resemblance to the events modern fair-goers enjoy.

The development of agricultural fairs in the United States during the nineteenth century formed the basis for modern fairs. As the country grew increasingly urbanized, these fairs have given farm families an opportunity to continue to gather, to view and compare agricultural and domestic products, and to enjoy themselves in a traditional setting. In addition, the fairs have provided people not involved in agriculture the ability to participate in this vital part of rural

<sup>15</sup> McCarry, *County Fairs*, pp. 106, 109, 115.

<sup>16</sup> “[Lewis and Clark County] Montana State Fairgrounds Racetrack,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Submitted November 3, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> William H. T. Robertson, *The History of Thoroughbred Racing in America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 7; “[Lewis and Clark County] Montana State Fairgrounds Racetrack,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, listed December 20, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Avery, “What is American About American Fairs?” p. 13-14; McCarry, *County Fairs*, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Julie A. Avery, “Jay Ford Laning (1853-1941): The Promotion of Agricultural Fairs,” in Julie A. Avery, ed., *Agricultural Fairs in America: Tradition, Education, Celebration* (Michigan State University Museum on behalf of the FairTime Project, 2000), pp. 41-47.

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heritage. County fairs typically involve entertainment which may include carnivals, professional musical acts, semi-professional competitive events such as tractor pulls and destruction derbies, and horse-racing. They retain much of their original purpose in showcasing livestock in a competitive setting which often includes the sale of selected stock; carefully designed and judged exhibits of domestic products ranging from works of art to canned goods; and a “commercial building” that allows entrepreneurs to demonstrate and sell products and services.<sup>20</sup>

### **Establishment of the Missoula County Fairgrounds and the Western Montana Fair<sup>21</sup>**

In 1874 several prominent local businessmen incorporated the Western Montana Agricultural, Mechanical & Mineral Association, to provide a venue for racing, and for the exhibition of agricultural and household products and goods. A committee selected a site for the fairgrounds (about a half mile south of the current fairgrounds), and by 1876, the association had financed the construction of a one-mile race track. Other improvements, reportedly financed by early Missoula settler John Rankin, included a saloon, a restaurant, and eight stables. Besides racing, exhibits at this first fairgrounds included agricultural implements and a floral display.

In 1878, the incorporators of the Western Montana Agricultural, Mechanical & Mineral Association dissolved the corporation. A few of the original investors, joined by new partners, then formed the Western Montana Fair Association. Fairs were held each year between 1879, the year of the first “Missoula Stampede” and 1883, although the 1882 event was limited to horse racing—reportedly because of an outbreak of smallpox. In 1884, however, the association listed the fairgrounds for sale, and there is no record of fairs being held in Missoula between 1884 and 1895.

Once again, in 1895, a group of private investors purchased land for a new fairground, this one located northwest of Missoula in the vicinity of the current North Reserve Street. The county’s involvement with the fair appears to have begun at this time, as it used prisoners from the county jail to build a road to the site. The following year, yet another group of private businessmen formed an association to finance improvements including, as usual, a race track and a two-story grandstand—the latter complete with exhibit space in both floors. In 1895, the first fair at the new site opened under the management of the Missoula Board of Trade (currently known as the Chamber of Commerce). Fairs continued to be held at this site until 1908, when the landowner sold the parcel to Missoula businessman, Thomas Greenough, who intended to raze the buildings. It should be noted that 1903 Legislature created the ability for counties to finance and manage county fairs, and create fair boards with duties and responsibilities. (Montana Code - Section 7-21-3401: Authorization To Create County Fair Commission) No fairs were held in Missoula in 1909 or 1910. The following year however, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners made its first substantial commitment to the future of the fair by signaling its intention to purchase grounds for the event.

Under a law passed in the last season of the legislature the County will be able to support the Fair more liberally than had been possible in the past, and the institution should be firmly established with good buildings, and hearty support given annual Fairs.<sup>22</sup>

It took ten years from the date of authorization for the Missoula County to select a site for the “County Fair” and to be able to finance purchase of the current site. There are currently more than forty county fairs in Montana with some fairs for multiple county regions where the populations are simply too small to afford individual fairs for each county. The Montana Association of Fairs counts more than half of Montana’s counties as members.

In 1912, the current fair site was offered for sale, but the appraised value fell below the asking price. That fall a citizen-backed petition calling for a \$50,000 bond to buy and improve a new fairgrounds, made the November 5<sup>th</sup> election ballot and passed by a margin of two-to-one.

<sup>20</sup> McCarry, *County Fairs*, 135.

<sup>21</sup> Unless otherwise noted, information included in this section is taken from the 1995 publication entitled “The Western Montana Fair, A Pictorial Heritage,” Stan Cohen and Katy and Les Jourdonnais, Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>22</sup> Missoula County Commissioners quoted in The Western Montana Fair, a Pictorial Heritage, p. 31

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Following the passage of the bond initiative, early in 1913, the county petitioned the judge of the district court to appoint three 'disinterested citizens' to appraise two parcels of real estate offered for fairgrounds development. The judge issued his instructions to the appraisers on March 7, identifying the two sites as Site #1, the Greenough Fair Ground Site, west of the city and containing 76 acres more or less, and, Site #2, the South Side Fair Ground Site, in section 33, T 13N, R19W, and containing 80 acres more or less<sup>23</sup>

Site No. 1, the former fairgrounds purchased by Thomas Greenough, would come with some existing infrastructure, including a one-mile race track, grandstand, bandstand, water tank and water lines. In January of 1913, a trustee for the Greenough site had made an offer to sell it and the improvements for \$16,900—pointing out that by its purchase the county would save money on new construction. On March 11, the South Missoula Land Company, owners of Site #2, reduced the asking price of the property from \$18,500.00 to \$16,000.<sup>24</sup> Ultimately, the county chose Site #2 for the development of its new fairgrounds.

One of the first improvements let for bid at the new fairgrounds was the race track. In 1913, the county first solicited bids for a one-mile track. Ultimately however, it chose to build a half-mile track. In spite of some citizen protests on moral grounds, the county signed an agreement with George W. Keith on April 3, 1914, to build the track for a cost of \$.70 a cubic yard of soil "placed, dumped (sic), spread, dragged and rolled." The deadline for completion was set at May 15<sup>th</sup>, giving Keith a little less than two months to complete the work.<sup>25</sup>

Besides the race track, work progressed on other improvements. Prominent Missoula architect, Ole Bakke, designed the first permanent buildings, including: a grandstand, two types of horse barns, a dairy cattle barn, and a small judge's stand.<sup>26</sup> The grandstand cost \$10,472, four barns totaled \$7,547, and the small judges' stand cost \$202. In 1915, Bakke produced drawings for an Agricultural Building (the building currently known as the 'commercial building' – B13), as well as a design for new bleachers<sup>27</sup>—to replace the ones built the previous year. All of the Bakke-designed buildings were placed in the area just north of the race track, leaving the remainder of the grounds to the north in open space to facilitate open-air exhibits and carnivals.

Other early improvements included a perimeter fence and buried water lines. Early in 1914, William C. Jensen submitted the winning bid of \$1.25 per rod of fencing for the eight-foot-high board fence to encircle the roughly 40-acre fairgrounds.<sup>28</sup> J. F. Harrington won the bid to excavate and backfill up to 2000 linear feet of water mains for \$.19¾ per linear foot.<sup>29</sup> The cost of building the fence was offset somewhat by the money from a lease granted to F. J. Hardenburgh, who, for the sum of \$40.00, was granted the sole right to paint and maintain advertisements on the 'fence space' for a twelve month period.<sup>30</sup>

Because of restrictions associated with World War I, the county suspended the Western Montana Fair in 1917 and 1918. However, fairs resumed in 1919 and by 1921, the fairgrounds infrastructure consisted of the race track and its associated grandstand and separate bleachers, the judges stand, a band stand, a cattle stable and a horse barn located along the west

<sup>23</sup> Instructions to Appraisers, March 7, 1913, Document No 191139307, Bin B52, P21, Missoula County Records.

<sup>24</sup> Sam Walters (Trustee) to Board of county Commissioners and Taxpayers of Missoula County, Montana, January 17, 1913, Document No. 19130127; South Missoula Land Company to Board of County Commissioners, March 11, 1913, Document No. 1913031, Bin B52, P21, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>25</sup> Agreement between George Keith and Missoula County, April 3, 1914, Document No. 19140403, Bin RF30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana..

<sup>26</sup> Drawings: "Horse Barn #1," "Horse Barn #2," "Dairy Cattle Barn," all dated 1914. Document No. 191404, Bin RF30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>27</sup> Drawings: "Bleachers for Western Montana Fair," 5/17/1915, Document No. 19150605, Bin RF30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>28</sup> Agreement between W. C. Jensen and County of Missoula, Document No. 19140612, Bin RF-30, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>29</sup> Bond and Contract between J. F. Harrington and County of Missoula, Document No 19140724, Bin RF30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>30</sup> Lease of Fair Ground Fence Space, Document No. 19150315, Bin RF30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

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edge of the property, the agricultural building (north of the bleachers), and two race stables located just north of the northeast edge of the track.<sup>31</sup>

In the mid 1920s the county invested in the construction of additional improvements and maintenance of existing infrastructure. In 1925, R. R. Wilbur, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, signed a contract with G. H. Elliott, for the construction of a new 'dance pavilion' for the Western Montana Fair Board. The new building cost \$4,261.00 to complete.<sup>32</sup> The commissioners also contracted with George W. Keith to resurface the race track.<sup>33</sup>

On 1926, John Karlberg won the bid to construct a rest room and refreshment room addition to the dance pavilion. C. J. Forbis served as the architect for this project, which cost the county \$1,890. The county's contract with Karlberg stipulated that the work commence on April 16 and be complete by May 15.<sup>34</sup> The following year C. J. Forbis designed new toilet booths to be added to the grand stand. Missoula contractor, T. E. Arnoldy, won the bid for this work, for a cost of \$540, and the condition that the work be completed by September 10, 1927.<sup>35</sup>

Because of the impacts of the Great Depression, during the 1930s, fairs were held only three years, in 1930, in 1936 and in 1937. During the first part of the decade, most of the work done at the fairgrounds consisted of maintenance, such as painting existing buildings and re-shingling the agricultural building<sup>36</sup>. Towards the end of the 1930s, as the depression eased somewhat, the county let bids for the construction of three new buildings, an additional agricultural building, a horse barn and a cattle barn. In 1937 Charles H. Pew won the contract for the agricultural building, with a bid of \$5,949, while the Elliott Construction Company, submitted the lowest bid of \$2,400 for the horse barn.<sup>37</sup> A 1937 aerial photograph shows that the main entrance on South Avenue had a rather elaborate arched sign board, supported by two pyramidal roofed towers, which in turn were topped with flagpoles. The ticket booths noted on early Sanborn Fire Insurance maps likely were located in the bottom of the support towers.

Even during the years that it did not hold fairs, the county generated some income from leasing various components of the fairgrounds. One such lease allowed the Sheridan Amusement Company, Inc. of Missoula the use of the dance pavilion and space for parking to host ballroom dances. The company was required to pay \$1,000 a year for the rights to use the fairgrounds property. However the amount would drop to \$600 a year if the county failed to sponsor the fair.<sup>38</sup>

By 1940, the economy had improved and the county set the budget for the fair at \$50,000. That year the Works Projects Administration (WPA) constructed a maintenance building on the fairgrounds, near the east boundary line, just north of two racing stables. The WPA funded construction of fourteen projects in the Missoula valley from 1936 – 1941, including improvements to the grounds at Fort Missoula, the Central School, an expansion of the Federal Building (Post Office), and four major buildings on the University of Montana campus. The WPA also built the Parkway (Orange Street) Bridge, Kiwanis Par and completed the Missoula County Airport, which opened in 1941. The 1941 fair was a great success with an Indian village recreated on the site, horse racing, and a circus. On the second day of the event, however, a fire broke out in the grandstand, which was filled with over 3,000 people. At the end of the day, the grandstand and bleachers, the main cattle stable, a horse stable, the dance hall, race paddock and hog pens, valued at

<sup>31</sup> Page 73 of the 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Missoula.

<sup>32</sup> Agreement to build Dance Pavilion, Document No. 19250730, Bin RF-30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>33</sup> Racetrack Resurface Contract, Document. No. 19250806, Bin RF30-9 Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>34</sup> Agreement between John Karlberg and County of Missoula, Document No. 19260420-524, Bin RF30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula Montana.

<sup>35</sup> Agreement between T. E. Arnoldy and County of Missoula, Document No 19270822, Bin RF30-9, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>36</sup> Agreement between E. R. Torrey and County of Missoula, Document No. 18350916 852; Agreement between Julius Lynd and the Board of County Commissioners, Document No 19360427, Box RH1-6, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>37</sup> Bid #1 and Bid #2, Document No. 19370630, Bin B52, P21, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>38</sup> Sheridan to County Commissioners, Feb 28, 1931, Document 19310310; Agreement between Missoula County and Sheridan Amusement company, Inc., Document 19310409, Box RH1-6, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

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\$128,000 were lost in the blaze. The rodeo and races scheduled for the final day of the fair proceeded on schedule, thanks in part to volunteer carpenters, who came in with equipment to clear the rubble and to erect temporary bleachers.

The devastating blow caused by the loss of the buildings in the fire, coupled with America's entry into World War II, effectively ended county sponsorship of the Western Montana Fair for the next fourteen years. In January of 1942, the commissioners went as far as letting bids to reconstruct the grand stand and two livestock barns destroyed in the fire.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, however, they bowed to the opinion of their constituents, the majority of which did not feel it was appropriate to expend materials on rebuilding the fairgrounds while America was at war. The entire fair board resigned in protest.

Between 1942 and 1954, the fairgrounds were used for a variety of purposes. During the war years, the WPA building housed a canning operation where citizens preserved fruits and vegetables grown in local Victory gardens. Rodeos were held sporadically but it was not until 1951 that small but noticeable progress was made towards improving the fairgrounds with the goal of reinstating the fair. That year, the original bleachers, built in 1915, were razed and new bleachers constructed that would increase the seating capacity by 2,304 people.<sup>40</sup>

Also in 1951, the county contracted with the local architectural firm of Fox & Ballas to design a new 'public latrine' for the fairgrounds. The call for construction bids was published on June 11, 1951 but withdrawn because of confusion regarding federal government regulations for rationing steel—still in short supply after the war. Shortly thereafter the US Department of Commerce ruled that the construction could go forward. On July 2, the county awarded the construction contract to Pew Construction Company for a cost of \$4,585. Lembke the Plumber won the bid to furnish and install the plumbing fixtures for an additional \$1,865. Unlike the earlier frame buildings the 17 by 30 foot latrine was built of 'pumice block,' with a header course of brick every second course.<sup>41</sup> Two years after construction of the public latrine, the commissioners added yet another building to the site, this one a 40 by 120-foot steel building, located adjacent to the west edge of the fairgrounds.

In 1954, the commissioners approved a new fair levy for the Missoula County Fair, and constructed a new, open grandstand. A year later the county acquired some surplus temporary barracks from the US Army's Fort Missoula and moved them to the fairgrounds to use as exhibit buildings and for the fair office. In 1959, the grandstand was renovated and the roof was added in 1979.<sup>42</sup>

From the 1960s to the present, new buildings added to the site occurred mostly as joint ventures between the fair board and private organizations. B12, the Floriculture Building (1960), B15 the Fine Arts Building (1964), B17 the Media Arts Building (1995), and B35 the Home Arts Building (1980) were all joint ventures, between the county and private corporations or nonprofit groups. The trend continued in the 1990s with the construction of a large Grayco steel building to house the Glacier Ice Rink, which is rented by the Missoula Area Youth Hockey Association (MAYHA). Later, this building was enclosed and a new section added after 2004 to form an open-sided rink.<sup>43</sup> Dedicated to hockey and free skating during the fall and winter months, the building is rented for other uses during the remainder of the year and used for animal exhibits during the fair. Rent from hockey events covers the mortgage for the ice rinks. Buildings have also been built and/or relocated in the area referred to as the backside or horse stable area, south of the race track. With a few exceptions, all of the buildings in this area are stables, and were built between 1914 and the 1960s.

<sup>39</sup> Notice to Contractors; Construction of a Grandstand and Notice to Contractors; Construction of Two Livestock Barns, Document No. 19420109, Bin B52, P21, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>40</sup> Resolution and Invitation to Bidders, Document No. 19520516 D-31, Bin B52, P21.

<sup>41</sup> Fox & Ballas Architects and Engineers, Elevations and Sections, Public Latrine, Missoula County Fairgrounds, June 1951, Document No. 19510611; Call for Bids, Document No. 19510610 D-31; Lembke the Plumber Proposal Form, June 28, 1951 and Letter of Award, July 2, 1951, Document No. 19510628; Pew Construction Company Proposal Form, June 29, 1951 and Letter of Award, July 2, 1951, Document No. 19510629; Bin 52, P21, Missoula County Records, Missoula, Montana.

<sup>42</sup> Plans for covering the grandstand, Dan Sullivan Assoc., 5/31/1979, Grandstand File, Western Montana Fair Offices, Missoula County Fairgrounds, Missoula.

<sup>43</sup> One of the early Bakke-designed buildings, known then as the 4-H Building, as well as the old county shop building, known then as the Rabbit Barn, were torn down to accommodate the addition.

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In summary, since 1914 the Missoula County Fairgrounds has hosted the Western Montana Fair, drawing exhibitors and participants from communities throughout the western part of the state. Agricultural, home arts and commercial exhibits as well as various types of entertainment (rodeos, carnivals and performances) have been part and parcel of the fair experience. Although the local effects of national and world events have, at times, resulted in the suspension of the annual event, whenever prosperity returns the Western Montana Fair has figured prominently in local community identity and tradition.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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2000 "What is American About American Fairs?" in Julie A. Avery, ed., *Agricultural Fairs in America: Tradition, Education, Celebration* Michigan State University Museum on behalf of the FairTime Project.

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Cohen, Stan and Katy and Les Jourdannais

1995 *The Western Montana Fair; A Pictorial Heritage*. Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana.

McCarrey, John

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Walrod, Cornelius

1883 *Fairs, Past and Present: A Chapter in the History of Commerce*. London: Elliot Stock.

**Archival Collections**

Missoula County Archives, Missoula County Courthouse, Missoula, Montana.

Western Montana Fair Archives, Missoula County Fairgrounds, Missoula, Montana.

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preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Missoula County, MT

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State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University

Other

Name of repository: Missoula State Historic Preservation Office

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 45 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) NAD27

A	<u>11</u>	<u>727432</u>	<u>5192473</u>	F	<u>11</u>	<u>727449</u>	<u>5191970</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
B	<u>11</u>	<u>727794</u>	<u>5192491</u>	G	<u>11</u>	<u>727464</u>	<u>5192019</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>11</u>	<u>727816</u>	<u>5192092</u>	H	<u>11</u>	<u>727406</u>	<u>5192017</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>11</u>	<u>727779</u>	<u>5192092</u>	I	<u>11</u>	<u>727393</u>	<u>5192435</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
E	<u>11</u>	<u>727782</u>	<u>5191981</u>				
	Zone	Easting	Northing				

**Legal Location (Township, Range & Section):** T13N R19W, NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 33

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary starts at the northwest corner of the fairgrounds (A) near the intersection of South Avenue and Russell Street, and runs east approximately 1,200 feet to the intersection of South Avenue and Stephens Avenue (B). The boundary then runs south approximately 1,300 feet to the southeast corner of the fairgrounds (C). The boundary then runs west approximately 100 feet to (D). From this point (D) the boundary extends south 400 feet to the southeast corner of the property (E). From this point the boundary extends west 1,000 feet to a point adjacent to the skateboard park (F). The boundary runs north approximately 200 feet to (G) and then west 200 feet to (H) in an attempt to exclude the skateboard park. From point H the boundary runs north 1,400 feet to the corner of Brooks and Russell (I) and then northeast 200 feet 1,300 to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the racetrack, exhibit building cluster, open-air exhibit area and parking areas historically associated with the Missoula County Fairgrounds. The southwest corner of the grounds has been excluded because it has been developed as a skateboard park and is no longer used for fair activities. The boundary includes all of the resources described in this nomination.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Janene Caywood, Suzanne Julin, and Dan Hall

organization Preserve Historic Missoula

date May 2010

street & number Building 28, Suite 2, Fort Missoula Road

telephone 406-728-9190

city or town Missoula

state MT zip code 59804

e-mail [crcs@montana.com](mailto:crcs@montana.com), [western@montana.com](mailto:western@montana.com)

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

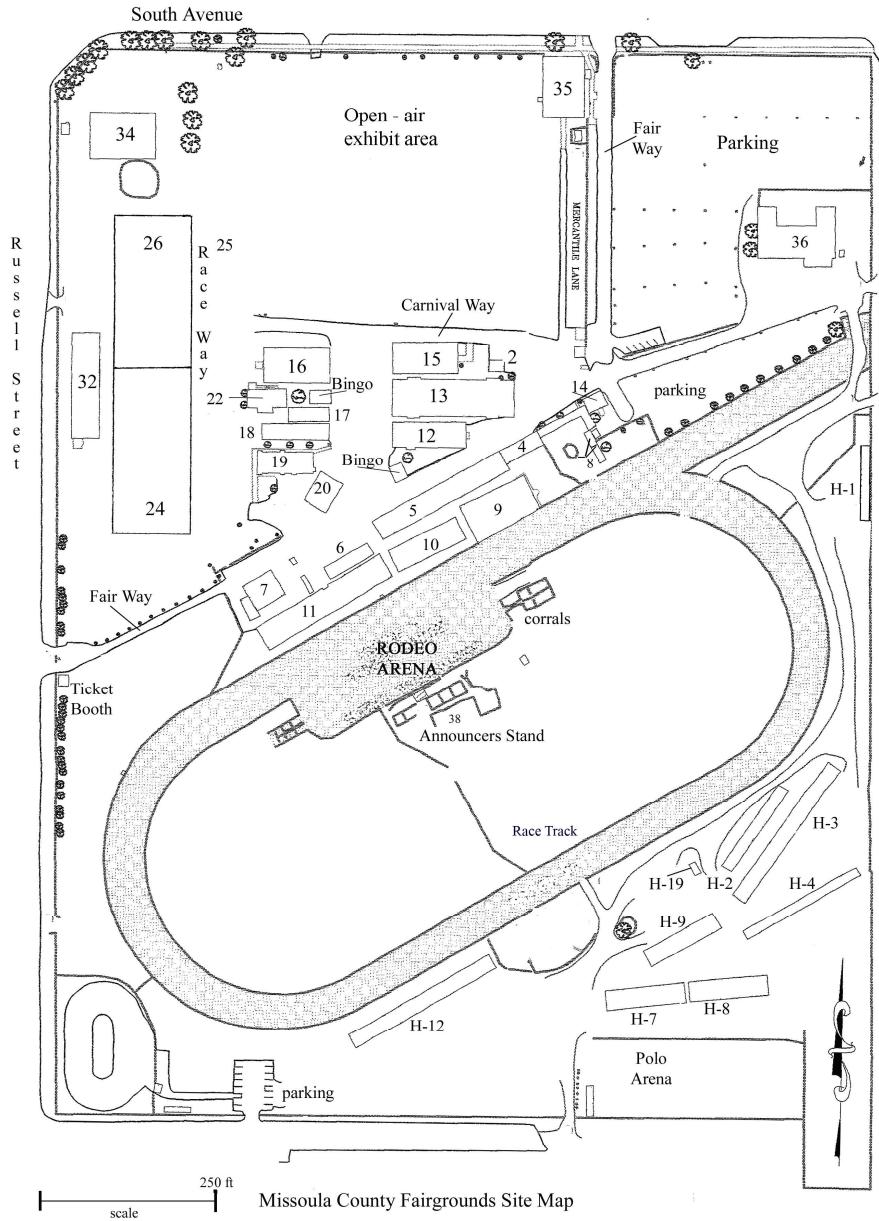
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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## Maps and Additional Documentation

### Site Map



Note: the Open - air exhibit area, race track, parking area and the vehicular circulation system are all C

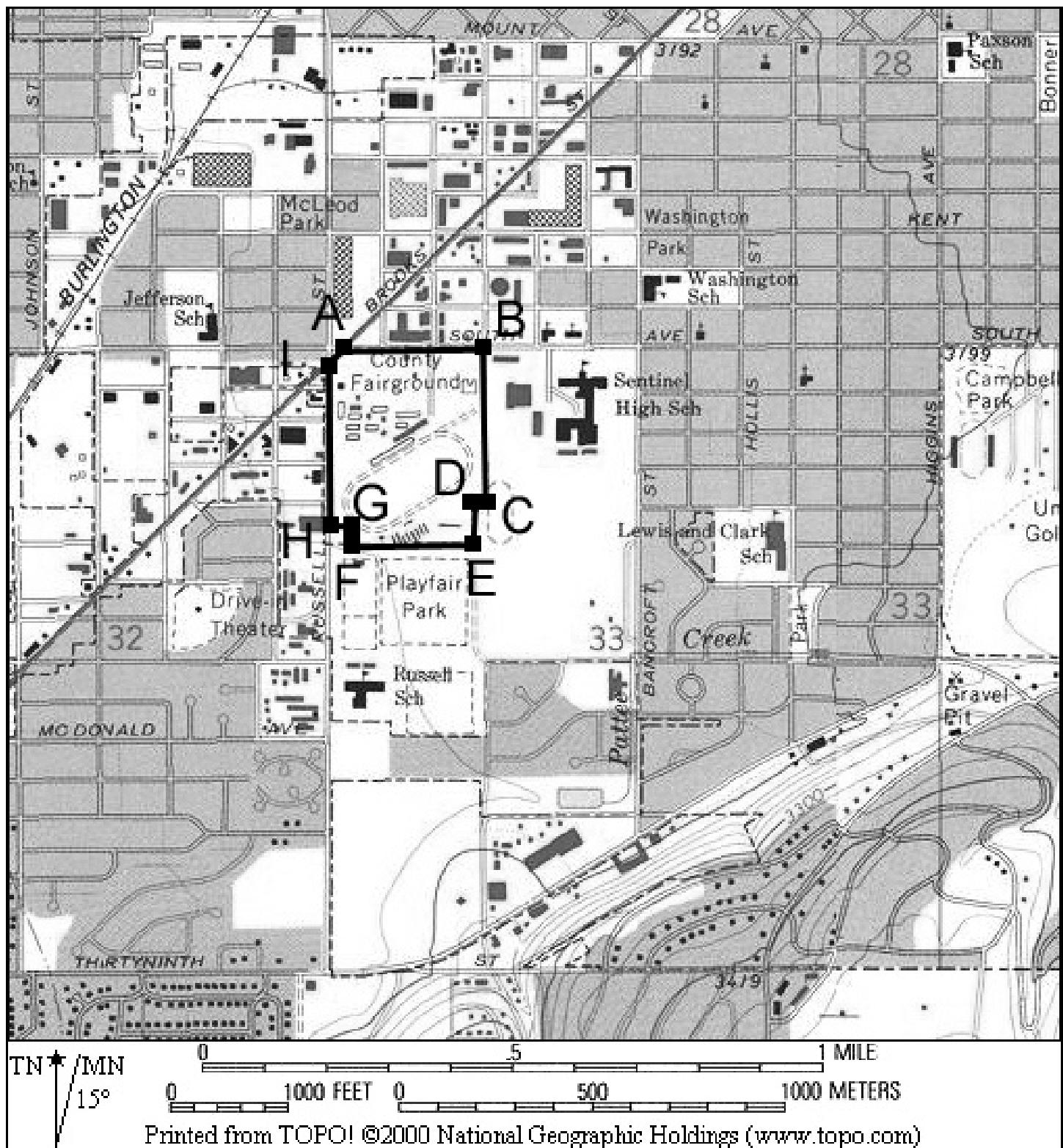


		MISSOULA, MONTANA	
11 = Grandstands C		26 = Open Rink NC	H-4 = Horse Stable C
12 = Floriculture C		32 = Butler Barn NC	H-7 = Horse Stable NC
4 = Fair Offices C	13 = Commercial Building C	34 = Llam Barn NC	H-8 = Horse Stable NC
5 = Concession Row NC	14 = Security NC	35 = Home Arts NC	H-9 = Horse Stable NC
6 = Pari Mutual Annex NC	15 = Fine Arts NC	36 = Shops C	H-12 = Horse Stable NC
7 = Beer Garden NC	16 = Culinary Arts C	38 Announcers Stand NC	
8 = Paddock Area	17 = Media Arts NC	H-1 = Horse Stable NC	H-19 = Restroom NC
1 C 3 NC	18 = 4-H Exhibits C	H-2 = Horse Stable C	Bingo Kiosks NC (2)
9 = Pari Mutual NC	19 = Restrooms NC	H-3 = Horse Stable C	C = Contributing
10 = Bleachers C	20 = Fair Center NC		N = Noncontributing
	22 = 4 H Cafe C		
	24 = Enclosed Hockey Rink NC		

## Fairgrounds base map.

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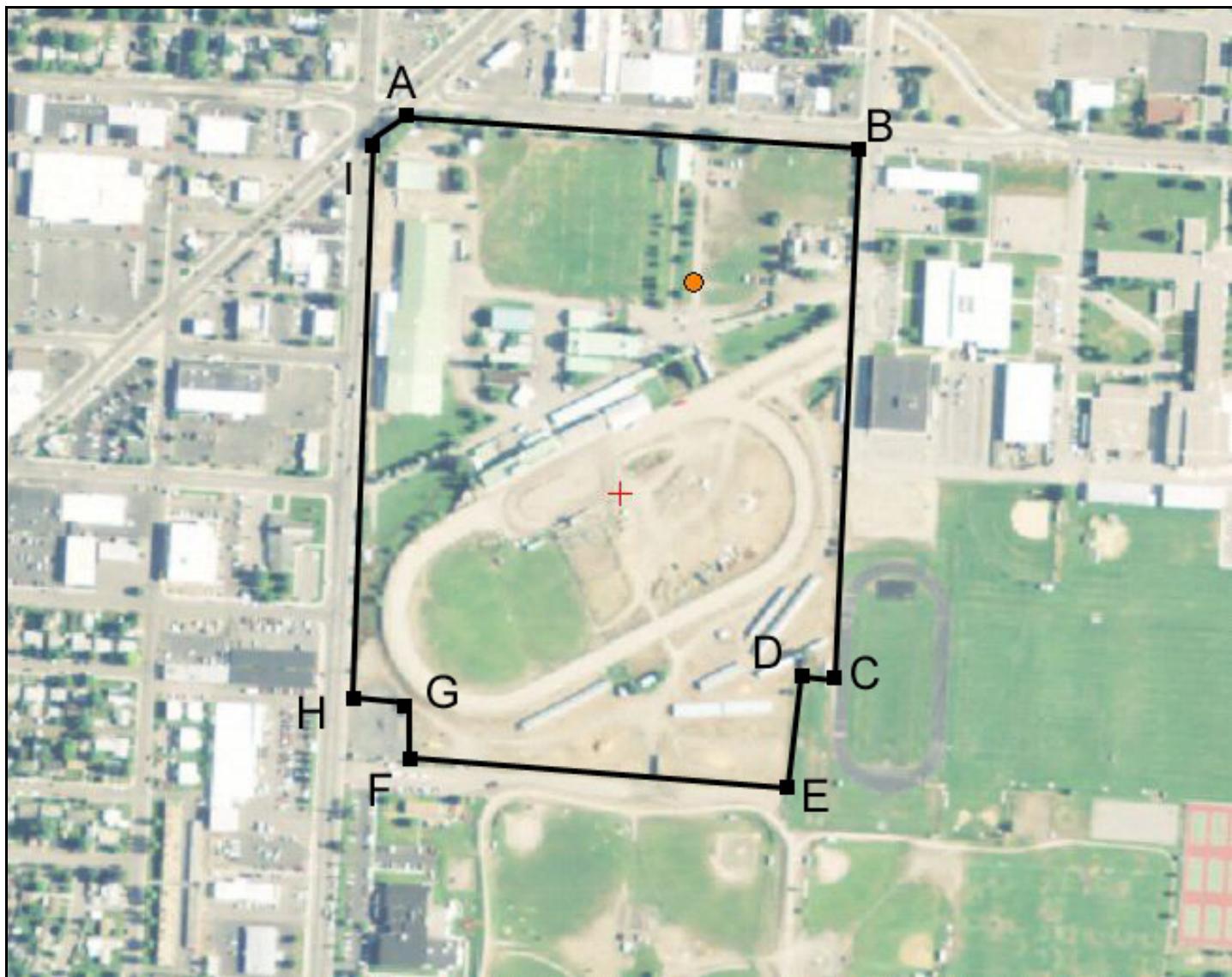
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Southeast Missoula USGS Quadrangle Map of Missoula County Fairgrounds showing location of points used for the UTM coordinates.

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Aerial photograph of Missoula County Fairgrounds depicting the boundary and boundary points, source: Montana Natural Resource Information System.

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Aerial view of Missoula County fairgrounds, August, 1937. View to the Southeast. Photo courtesy Stan Cohen.

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Aerial view, Missoula County fairgrounds, August 1937. View to the West. Photo courtesy Stan Cohen.

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

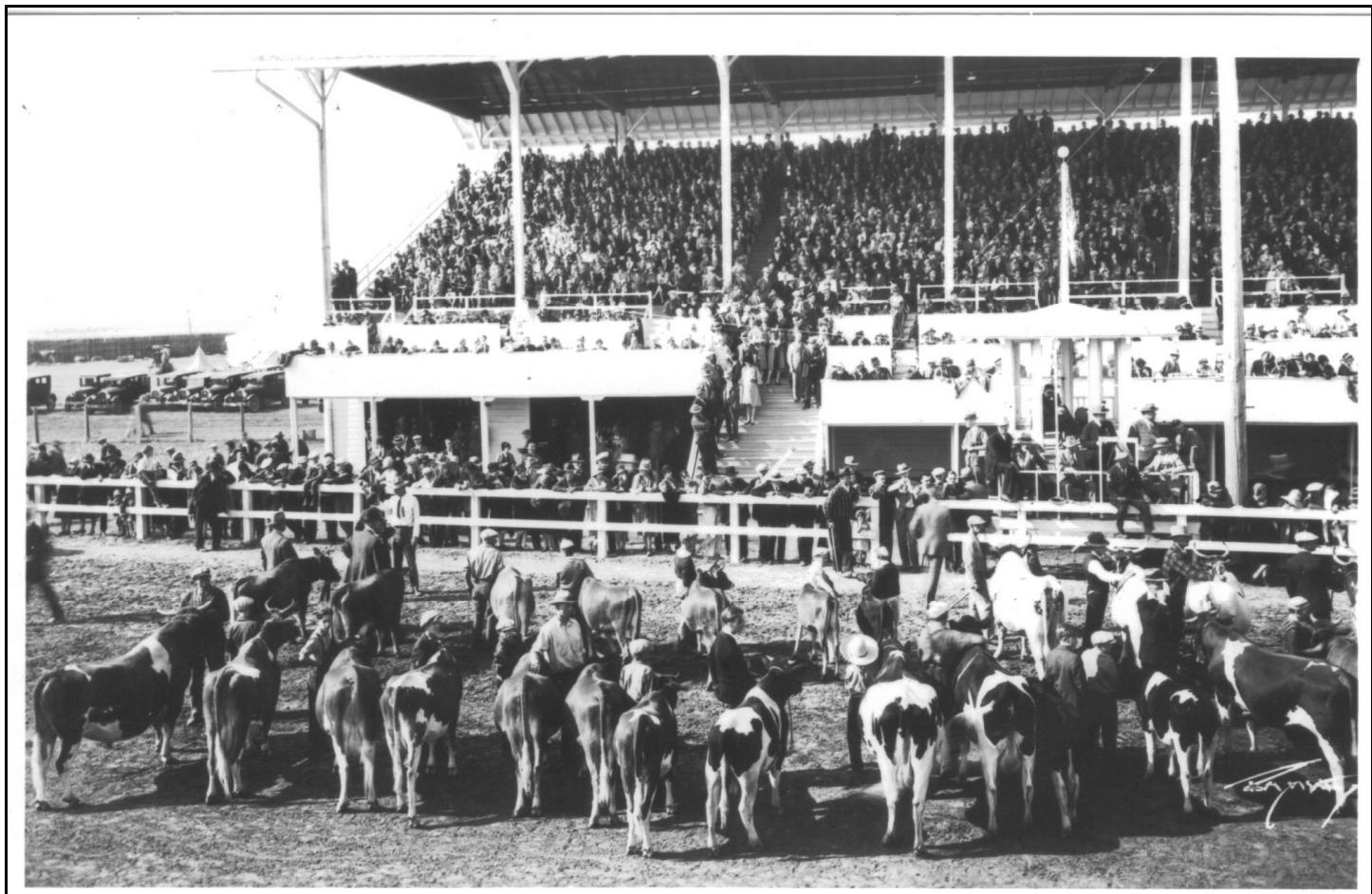
Missoula County, MT  
County and State



Missoula County fairgrounds, race track and original grandstand, 1904. Grandstand subsequently burned. Photo courtesy Stan Cohen.

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State



Missoula County fairgrounds, cattle sale, 1930s, note the current grandstand, photo courtesy Stan Cohen.

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State



Cattle sale, Missoula County fairgrounds, 1930s. Photo courtesy Stan Cohen.

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District

**City or Vicinity:** Missoula

**County:** Missoula County

**State:** Montana

**Photographer:** Dan S. Hall

**Date Photographed:** 2 May 2008

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:** See below.

1 of 14.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0001

Building 16, Agricultural Building, facing northeast.

Photo #0001

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0002

Building 4, Fair Offices, former internment barracks from Fort Missoula, facing southwest.

Photo #0002

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0003

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 8, Paddock Area, facing northeast.

Photo #0003

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0004

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 10, Grandstands, facing northwest.

Photo #0004

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0005

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 11, Grandstands, facing west.

Photo #0005

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0006

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 12, Floricultural Building, facing east.

Photo #0006

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0007

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 13, Commercial Building, facing southwest.

Photo #0007

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0008

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 18, 4-H Exhibit Hall, former internment barracks from Fort Missoula, facing west.

Photo #0008

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0009

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 22, 4-H Café, facing east.

Photo #0009

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0010

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District

Name of Property

Missoula County, MT

County and State

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 36, Shops Facility, constructed by WPA, facing north.  
Photo #0010

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0011

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, H-2, Horse Stalls, facing northeast.  
Photo #0011

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0012

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, H-3, Horse Stalls, facing northeast.  
Photo #0012

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0013

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, H-4, Horse Stalls, facing north.  
Photo #0013

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0014

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Race Track, facing southwest.  
Photo #0014

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District

Name of Property

Missoula County, MT

County and State



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0001

Building 16, Agricultural Building, facing northeast.

Photo #0001



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0002

Building 4, Fair Offices, former internment barracks from Fort Missoula, facing southwest.

Photo #0002

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0003  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 8, Paddock Area, facing northeast.  
Photo #0003



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0004  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 10, Grandstands, facing northwest.  
Photo #0004

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0005  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 11, Grandstands, facing west.  
Photo #0005



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0006  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 12, Floricultural Building, facing east.  
Photo #0006

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District

Name of Property

Missoula County, MT

County and State



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0007

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 13, Commercial Building, facing southwest.  
Photo #0007



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0008

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 18, 4-H Exhibit Hall, former internment barracks from Fort Missoula, facing west.  
Photo #0008

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District

Name of Property

Missoula County, MT

County and State



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0009

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 22, 4-H Café, facing east.

Photo #0009



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0010

Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Building 36, Shops Facility, constructed by WPA, facing north.

Photo #0010

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0011  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, H-2, Horse Stalls, facing northeast.  
Photo #0011



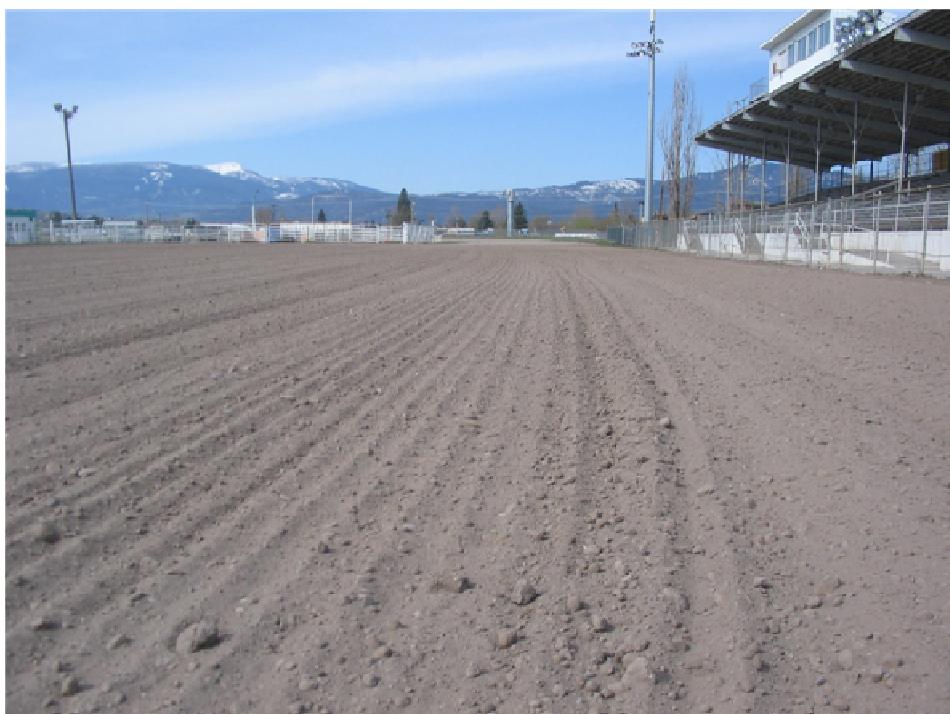
MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0012  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, H-3, Horse Stalls, facing northeast.  
Photo #0012

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0013  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, H-4, Horse Stalls, facing north.  
Photo #0013



MT\_MissoulaCounty\_MissoulaCountyFairgroundsHD\_0014  
Missoula County, Montana, Daniel S. Hall, 05/02/2008, Race Track, facing southwest.  
Photo #0014

Missoula County Fairgrounds Historic District  
Name of Property

Missoula County, MT  
County and State

**Property Owner:** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Missoula County  
street & number 200 West Broadway telephone 406-721-5700  
city or town Missoula state MT zip code 59802

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.