

Part One

Our local county museum only receives funding from fundraisers and private donations. Other county museums receive funding from county tax dollars. The difference with our museum is that we don't get public funding. We think that our county should put more effort into helping our museum on an annual basis by funding. This is important because having a museum should be of great importance to our county, it needs to have money to continue as it is. The museum barely has enough money throughout the year to keep it going. We think having a museum in our county is important because people like to learn the history of it, believe it or not, some things in there are very interesting. Museums hold many historical facts that I bet not even half of our country knows about. We understand that the museum building is small, but if we were getting publicly funded we could try to make it bigger, we could get more security cameras in the building to put in a couple more rooms because as of right now they only have one camera for security.

Part Two

The primary research we used was making a survey and sending them to different owners of other county museums. The other primary research was going on this website: <http://montanamuseums.org>, on this website we went through and found other county museums, because they were similar to our county museum, and we called them to ask if they would like to fill out a survey for us.

We looked up some additional information on the internet to find out how museums are supported financially in the United States. One of the things we found out is that some museums actually make you pay to go in and look at their stuff, but some like ours is completely free. If you go to bigger museums they're the ones that make you pay to go in and look at all their stuff.

Our class visited the local museum and the director was explaining how one year someone stole something from them and they couldn't tell who it was because they only have one security camera in the museum. Our museum needs better security, and it needs to be bigger so we can get more artifacts to look at. After we went to the museum we had to pick a topic to write this paper on, the museum interested us so we decided to write it on that.

We went onto the website <http://montanamuseums.org/> and we looked through the different counties and we picked some and wrote down the name and phone numbers of most of the museums. We also sent our group member Rebekah Fletcher to the museum to find out what Penny has got to say about the subject, compared to other people's responses. She answered all of our survey questions. As a group we also made a community survey for the teachers, of Columbus Middle and High School, 30 of them responded. The questions we asked were:

- "Have you visited The Museum of the Beartooths?"
- "How often do you visit the museum?"
- "Do you ever take students to the museum for educational purposes?"
- "Are you interested in taking students to the museum for educational purposes?"

For the community survey was asked:

- How is your museum funded?
- Does the museum have enough funding to keep it going?
- How much money does it take to keep the museum going yearly?
- If you were to estimate, what percentage of your time as a museum leader is spent fundraising?
- Does your county support your museum financially? How did you go about getting that support?
- Any tips for successfully funding a museum?

Here is who we contacted:

Yellowstone Country

Big Timber

- *Crazy Mountain Museum* (406) 932-5126
(cmmuseum@mtintouch.net)
- *Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame & Western Heritage CTR* (406) 932-5444 (christy@montanacowboyfame.com)

Columbus

- *Museum of the Beartooth* (406) 322-4588

Gallatin

- *Little Bear Schoolhouse Museum Manhattan* (406) 580-6228
- *Manhattan Area Historical Society*

Red Lodge

- *Buses of Yellowstone Preservation Trust Inc.* (406) 860-4895
- * *Carbon County Arts Guild an Historic Depot Gallery* (406) 446-1370
- *Carbon County Historical Society & Museum* (406) 446-3667
(director@carboncountyhistory.com)

Three Forks

- *Headwaters Heritage Museum* (406) 285-4778 (No Answer)

West Yellowstone

- *Yellowstone Historic Center* (406) 646-7461

Central Montana Country

Bynum

- *Two Medicine Dinosaur Center* (406) 469-2211

Chester

- * *Liberty County Museum & Archives Association INC.* (406) 759-5256 (bubbles@itstriangles.com)
- *Liberty Village Arts Center* (406) 759-5652

Chinook

- Blaine County Museum (406) 357-2590 (No Answer)
- Blaine County Wildlife Museum (406) 357-3102 (No Answer)

Conrad

- Conrad Transportation & Historical Museum

Havre

- H. Earl Clack Museum (406) 265-4000
- High Line Heritage Resources (406) 399-5225

Harlowton

- Bair Family Museum (406) 572-3314
- Upper Musselshell Museum (406) 632-5519
(museum@itstriangle.com)

Lewistown

- Central Montana Historical ASSN. Inc. (406) 535-3642
- Marias Museum of History and Art (406) 424-2551
- Toole County Museum (406) 424-8300
(tccomm@toolecountymt.gov)

ULM

- First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park (406) 866-2217

Winifred

- Winifred Museum (406) 462-5425

Missouri River Country

Ashland

- St. Labre Indian School Museum (406) 784-4500

Culbertson

- Culbertson Museum (406) 787-6320

Glasgow

- *Valley County Pioneer Museum (406) 228-8692 (Didn't Answer)

Jordan

- *Garfield County Museum (406) 557-2308

Lambert

- Lambert Historical Society (406) 774-3777

Malta

- Great Plains Dino Museum (406) 654-5300
- Phillips County Museum (406) 654-1037 (Closed)

Scobey

- Daniels County Museum ASSN (406) 487-5965 (Closed)

Sidney

- Mondak Heritage Center (406) 433-3500

Wibaux

- Wibaux County Museum (406) 796-9969 (Didn't go through)

Southeast Montana Country

Billings

- *Yellowstone County Museum (406) 256-6811

Ekalaka

- Carter County Museum (406) 775-6886
(ccmuseum@midrivers.com)

Forsyth

- Rosebud County Pioneer Museum (406) 346-7457 (Didn't Want One)

Hardin

- Big Horn County Historical Museum (406) 665-1671
(infobighorncounty@museum.org)

Hysham

- Treasure County 89ers Museum (406) 342-5252

Terry

- Prairie County Museum & Gallery (406) 635-4040 (No Answer)

Southwest Montana Country

Clancy

- * Jefferson County Museum (406) 933-5528

Dillon

- Beaverhead County Museum (406) 683-5027
(bvhdmuseum@hotmail.com)

Townsend

- Broadwater County Museum (406) 266-5252 (No Answer)

Part Three

These are the people that have answered us back so far:

Big Timber

- Crazy Mountain Museum (406) 932-5126

Ekalaka

- Carter County Museum (406) 775-6886

Hamilton

- Ravalli County Museum (406) 363-3338

Dillion

- Beaverhead County Museum (406) 683-5027

When we spoke with Penny Redli, the executive director of the Museum of the Beartooths in Columbus, Montana, we shared the responses from other museums. We posed the same questions to Penny, and she said that our local museum does not have enough funding. She also said that she spends over half of her time at the museum, she is working on a new exhibition, she is always coming up with ways to get fundraising and most of the other museums don't even spend half of their time compared to how much time Penny spends.

Penny's responses agreed with many we received in our surveys. She said she also writes grants and looks for donors. One of the biggest challenges, she said, is trying to find grants that

reflect the values and contents of our museum. Penny stated that she agrees that it is a daily struggle to get fundings and donations but she loves her job and doesn't want to give up.

Penny said 90% of her time as a museum leader is spent fundraising, she is always coming up with ways to get fundraising and add new artifacts to the museum. Most of the other museums only spend between 20-60% and one said they don't spend much time with fundraising at all. Penny told us that the museum actually did not have enough funding to keep it going, she said it takes \$110,000 to keep the museum going yearly. Penny also explained that our county does not support our museum financially and they do not get any money from the public.

We also got responses from 4 other museums in Montana. 60% of the other museums are funded privately, 60% public, 100% fundraising, and 100% get money from donations. Two museums from Ekalaka and Hamilton, Carter County Museum and Ravalli Museum and Historical Society, said they do not have enough money to keep them going and it takes \$150,000 and \$230,000 for the two to keep them going yearly. It takes Ravalli County Museum from Hamilton \$135,000 and Beaverhead County Museum from Dillon, \$62,500 to keep going as a museum yearly. Other museums from Hamilton, Dillon, and Big Timber say they do have enough money to continue going but some say barely or even not always.

Carter County Museum said they spend 20% of their time is spent fundraising for their museum, Ravalli County said 60%, Ravalli County Museum said 60%, Beaverhead County said 35 hours per week, and Crazy Mountain Museum from Big Timber said "I don't spend enough time with fundraising. We had a car go through our museum last year. It's taken time to get that settled. I was hired just before the accident so my focus has been elsewhere. At this point I'd say 15%. I plan to increase it 50% this year."

The responses we got from teachers were: 66.7% of the middle and high school said they have visited the Museum of the Beartooths. 33.3% of them responded with no, they have not visited our museum. 73.3% said they don't visit the museum very often, 16.7% said they visit sometimes, and 10% said they visit the museum often. 73.3% said they often don't take students to the museum for educational purposes, 13.3% said they take students sometimes, and 10% said they take their students to the museum often. The last question we asked was "Are you interested in taking students to the museum for educational purposes?", 50% said yes, 26.7% said no, and 23.3% said somewhat.

Part four

One could argue that we are a small County in Stillwater with very few people in it so our county doesn't need to support our museum, we have a population of 9,318, but Carter County has a population of only 1,174 people. Someone could also argue that Carter County gets their money from the oil they have, but, in Stillwater County, we have the mine which is the largest corporation in Montana. So from all the evidence we gathered from Penny we found out our local museum actually does not get enough money to continue going as a museum. We found out from other museums in Montana that some of them don't have enough money to keep going either, but some others do. We actually learned a lot about our museum and others that we didn't know before. Such as, if the county supports their museum financially, some museums said the county does but others said it doesn't. Our museum here in Columbus does not get

supported financially by our county and I think that's what our problem is. If the museum actually got money from our community we'd have enough money to get more security cameras and we could get better artifacts for exhibits and Penny wouldn't have to work so hard just on raising money, she might actually be able to work at improve the museum in different ways. We made the community survey questions to see what how these museums keep it going, and how much money they get yearly. Where they're located how many people they have in there town.

The responses we got from teachers were: 66.7% of the middle and high school said they have visited the Museum of the Beartooths. 33.3% of them responded with no, they have not visited our museum. We think it's a big deal teachers don't go to the museum because they don't have time in their schedule to take kids over there. 73.3% said they don't visit the museum very often, 16.7% said they visit sometimes, visiting the museum does not have to be an everyday thing so not visiting very often or sometimes is fine, it's better than not at all. 10% said they visit the museum often. Visiting the museum often could mean they help out there or they just like to go and check things out that have just been added to the displays. 73.3% said they often don't take students to the museum for educational purposes, 13.3% said they take students sometimes. We think that taking kids to the museum could improve their learning with older history and 10% said they take their students to the museum often, it's really good that teachers take their students to the museum to learn because they could find something really interesting and want to learn more about it. When we asked the teachers if they are interested in taking students to the museum for educational purposes, 50% said yes, 26.7% said no, and 23.3% said somewhat. We think that you should want to take your students to the museum to learn older history, some of it could be really important to know and they should have new learning experiences.

Part 5

Based on all of our evidence, we feel that the museum should be funded better so that way our museum, the Museum of the Beartooths, has enough money to stay open, Penny said it takes \$110,000 to keep the museum going yearly. They can get better security and they would also be able to make the building bigger so they have room for new artifacts.

They should be able to get better security cameras, a stronger door, and maybe an alarm that would go off if someone breaks in. We think it would be good for our museum to stay open because we have really good old artifacts that people can come and learn about when they visit.

We think that if the museum was funded publically then they would get more money to stay open yearly. The Museum should get tax dollars so they don't have to struggle with making money for themselves to stay open. As a group, we think that with all the data we collected that the museum should definitely be able to make changes that benefits them. Our museum should get publicly funded, why have a museum if they barely have enough money to keep it open? If our county built it why shouldn't we help them keep it open? We think that the government should care more about museums and help them to stay open so people can learn new things.

We feel that as a community, we could help with funding maybe once or twice a month. We could have bake sales, cookie dough sales, magazine sales, or we could even do a car wash maybe once a year during the summer. Our museum shouldn't have to struggle with money to

keep it going. Our museum could probably get a lot of help from fundraisers that our school could help with maybe a couple times a year. We have thought of a few options to keep our museum going and now we just need to start putting them in place.