

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY

- Visitor's Center opens
- Spring Classic Fishing Derby
- Memorial weekend—Museums open

JUNE

- Summer Celebration, Art on the Levee, Street Dance and Fireworks (last weekend)
- Geraldine Fun Day

JULY

- Farmer's Market—July–Sept., Thursdays 5PM to 6PM Front St. Levee

AUGUST

- Chouteau County Fair
- PRCA Rodeo
- Taste of Chouteau County
- Shakespeare in the Park



DECEMBER

- Chouteau County Country Christmas
- Bridgeport Station Arts & Crafts Show

WINTER

- Chouteau County Performing Arts—World class entertainment at a small town price. Enjoy performances monthly from October–April.



VISITOR'S CENTER *
Stop by the old fire station next to the bridge for info and brochures to help you make the most of your time in our city.
1421 Front Street



For exact dates visit
www.fortbentonchamber.org
or call 406.622.3864

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FORT BENTON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Welcome to the
BIRTHPLACE of MONTANA

HISTORIC LEGACY

- 1805 First recorded white visitor when the Lewis & Clark Expedition traversed the area.
- 1846 Site of Fort Benton established as a fur trading post
- 1860 First steamboat arrives and makes Fort Benton the innermost port on the Missouri.
- 1862 Gold is discovered in Montana and fortune seekers flood into the area arriving by steamboat. Buildings stretch for a mile along the levee. Fort Benton gains the reputation as the toughest town in the west and vigilante justice prevails.
- 1864 Montana becomes a Territory.
- 1869 U.S. Army purchases fur fort.
- 1874 Northwest Mounted Police come to Fort Benton and bring law and respectability.
- 1878 Fort Benton golden decade of river trade begins and most of the brick buildings are constructed during this prosperous period.
- 1880 Open range cattle and sheep replace buffalo on the plains.
- 1887 The Railroad comes to Fort Benton, ending river trade.
- 1888 Fort Benton bridge is built, the first to span the Missouri in Montana.
- 1889 Montana becomes a State.
- 1908 Homesteaders pour in and agriculture becomes Fort Benton's largest industry.
- 1917 Drought drives many farmers out of Montana.
- 1928 Chouteau County becomes Montana's leading wheat producer.



BUSINESS CHARM TRAIL

Visit many of the friendly Fort Benton businesses and collect a charm as a souvenir. Charm Trail participants listed on this brochure are marked with an (*). For a full Charm Trail map, visit the Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Center by the old bridge (1421 Front Street).



ACCOMMODATIONS

- 1 GRAND UNION HOTEL * (406) 622-1882
- 2 PIONEER LODGE * (406) 622-5441
- 3 FORT MOTEL (406) 622-3312
- 4 LARK & LAUREL BED & BREAKFAST (406) 622-3359
- 5 EMILY'S VACATION COTTAGE * (406) 622-5209
- 6 FRANKLIN STREET GUEST HOUSE * (406) 733-2261
- 7 RIVER SIDE GUEST HOUSE * (406) 622-5605
- 8 BENTON RV * (406) 622-5015
- 9 D & S RV * (406) 622-5104
- 10 CHOUTEAU CO. CAMPGROUND (406) 622-5505



PHOTO & DESIGN CREDITS— Burnt Image Photography: River photo (opposite page), Longhorn golf photo, Kayak photo, Grand Union Hotel photo. River Press, Tim Burmeister: Old bridge, fireworks, and runners photo. Kellee Wallace: New bridge photo (lower right). Joellyn Clark Designs: Charm bracelet photos and brochure design.



RESTAURANTS

- 1 UNION GRILLE * (406) 622-1882
- 2 WAKE CUP COFFEE HOUSE * (406) 622-5400
- 3 THE FREEZE (seasonal) (406) 622-5071
- 4 THE BANQUE CLUB * (406) 622-5272
- 5 EXPEDITION PIZZA * (406) 622-5102
- 6 THE CLUBHOUSE * (406) 622-3433
- 7 THE GILDED LEAF (lunch only) (406) 622-3443



RECREATION

- Fishing
- Upland Bird & Big Game Hunting
- Boating, Canoeing, Kayaking
- Camping, Hiking, & Biking
- Year-round Birding

Due to very swift undercurrents, extreme caution and proper safety gear is advised when swimming or floating on the Missouri River.

- 1 MISSOURI RIVER OUTFITTERS 1-866-282-3295
- 2 ADVENTURE BOUND CANOE/SHUTTLE 1-877-538-4890
- 3 MONTANA FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS www.fwp.mt.gov (406) 444-2535
- 4 SIGNAL POINT GOLF CLUB (406) 622-3666
- 5 FORT BENTON CITY POOL (406) 622-5494



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COMMUNITY SERVICES

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| INFO — VISITOR'S CENTER | FAIRGROUNDS |
| PUBLIC REST ROOMS | OLD FORT PARK |
| SHERIFF'S OFFICE | POOL |
| HOSPITAL | TENNIS COURTS |
| ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | GOLF COURSE |
| HIGH SCHOOL | CANOE LAUNCH |
| AIRPORT | BOAT LAUNCH |
| GROCERY | RV PARK |
| GAS | |
| LODGING | |
| RESTAURANTS | |

(For full listing of lodging and restaurants, see reverse.)

10 RIDER OF THE PURPLE SAGE (2007)

Gifted to Fort Benton in 2007 by George Montgomery Foundation for the Arts. Actor/Artist George Montgomery and artist Gary Schildt.

11 PACIFIC HOTEL / CULBERTSON HOUSE *

Originally called the Centennial Hotel. In 1882 the hotel was rebuilt in brick and renamed the Pacific Hotel, later known as the Culbertson House. Recently restored.

12 1500 BLOCK—BLOODIEST BLOCK IN THE WEST *

With the discovery of gold in 1862, Fort Benton became the toughest town in the West. This block was the heart of businesses such as saloons, dance halls and brothels; some ran 24 hours a day from early spring until winter.

13 CHOUTEAU COUNTY LIBRARY (1916) *

The oldest county library in the state. Offers internet access and an extensive Montana collection. 1518 Main Street (406) 622-5222

14 BAKER HOUSE (1867)

Home of the most powerful trading company in the region.

STORY OF SHEP

Follow the story of Shep, the dog who captured hearts across the nation for his undying faithfulness to his master. When a sheepherder from the plains above Fort Benton died in 1936, his loyal dog Shep followed his casket to the train depot where it was shipped back East. Shep met every single train for 5½ years looking for his master to return. He became famous when his story was featured in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. Fans traveled from far and wide to greet him until he became feeble and fell under the wheels of a train in 1942.

1 SHEP'S BURIAL SITE (1942)

After a funeral service attended by hundreds of townspeople, Shep was buried on the bluffs above the railroad depot. Even today you can visit this site, marked by an obelisk and a steel silhouette of Shep himself.

2 SHEP MEMORIAL STATUE (1994)

After a memorial service commemorating the 50th anniversary of his passing, the renewed interest in Shep's

LEVEE WALK & HISTORIC DISTRICT

TRAIL

1 MURPHY, NEEL & CO. BUILDING (1880)

Originally the mercantile establishment of Murphy, Neel & Company, later becoming Davis Brother's Grocery.

2 WELLS FARGO OFFICE (1880)

This small brick building was a bank, telegraph office and stage line office.

3 STOCKMAN'S NATIONAL BANK (1889)

Built at the end of the steamboat era, it handled accounts of big stockmen during the days of the open range; closed in 1924.

4 GRAND UNION HOTEL (1882) *

Restored in the 1990s after years of neglect, it was known for its elegance—the finest accommodation between Minneapolis and Seattle. It hosted the rich and the famous, and was the heart of social life in Fort Benton during the golden years.

5 ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH (1880) *

The oldest Episcopal church in Montana. It was built in 1880 and the first services were held on August 10, 1881.

6 CHOUTEAU COUNTY COURTHOUSE (1884)

Replacing the original courthouse which burned down in 1882. 1308 Franklin Street (406) 622-5151

7 1400 BLOCK—HISTORIC UPRIVER BUSINESSES *

The first mercantile establishments and hotels were located here; several burned in a fire in 1950.

8 OLD ENGINE HOUSE (1887) CHAMBER VISITOR'S CENTER *

Fort Benton's first firehouse contains the original hand pumper that came upriver by steamboat. It later served as City Hall and is now on the National Registry of Historic Places. It currently houses our Information Center and Fort Benton's Chamber of Commerce. 1421 Front Street

9 OLD FORT BENTON BRIDGE (1888)

First bridge to span the Missouri in Montana. The first span was a swing span to allow passage of the steamboats. The flood of 1908 collapsed the swing span; the present one was installed in 1927.

Home of the most powerful trading company in the region. The Bakers and Conrads controlled their vast empire from this unpretentious house.

15 OBELISK TO CAPTAIN JOHN MULLAN

The Mullan Road was the first federal road in the West, starting from this point to Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River. Constructed between 1859–1860.

16 CHOTEAU HOUSE (1900)

From a frame building known as the Thwing House built in 1868, the New Choteau House was constructed in 1900 as a 3-story brick structure—one of the finest. The dapper Irishman Jere Sullivan, the ambassador of good will in Fort Benton, operated it for years.

17 MANDAN REPLICA (1965)

A keelboat that was used on the river prior to steamboats. The Mandan was built for the movie Big Sky. The original Mandan's last voyage was in 1921.

18 T.C. POWER & CO. (1867)

T.C. Power and Company operated from 1867 to 1932—this building is the last store of the company that, during the steamboat days, was one of two mercantile empires that dominated Montana and the Northwest.

19 LEWIS & CLARK MEMORIAL (1976)

The State of Montana's official monument to the Expedition dedicated during Montana's celebration of the United States' Bicentennial in 1976. Bob Scriver, Sculptor.

20 REMAINS OF THE BABY ROSE (1900)

This small steamboat was one of the last on the upper river. Its hull remains mired in the mud at the river's edge below the Lewis & Clark Statue.

21 WHOOP-UP TRAIL MONUMENT (1969)

Stone and plaque mark the beginning of an international trail that served the western Canadian provinces until the arrival of the railroad.

22 VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK (1922)

Monument area containing many memorials including the Doughboy Statue commemorating the First World War veterans and a Naval Warship Memorial dedicated in 2008.

23 CENTENNIAL STONE (1946)

Commemorative monument to 100 years in Fort Benton.

24 RUINS OF OLD FORT BENTON (1846)

Only one bastion is left of the original adobe fort. Located inside the reconstructed fort.

story prompted the community to erect a tribute to their faithful mascot. Surrounding the stone, over 800 bricks bear inscriptions of friends in the community or their beloved pets. Bob Scriver, Sculptor.

MUSEUMS

1 UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT INTERPRETIVE CENTER (2006) *

Experience the natural and cultural history of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and wild and scenic upper Missouri River. Open 8AM to 5PM, 7 days a week from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September. Winter hours: 8AM to 5PM, Monday through Friday. 701 River Street (406) 622-4000.

2 MUSEUM OF THE UPPER MISSOURI (1957) *

Early history of the upper river and tales of the toughest river town in the west. Open Memorial weekend through the end of September, 10:30AM to 4:30PM, Monday through Saturday, Noon to 4PM on Sunday. (406) 622-5316

- The Old Fort- Tour the rebuilt Fort and step inside the oldest building in Montana—the old Blockhouse.
- Starr Gallery- Featuring Karl Bodmer's Travels Into The Interior of North America aquatint collection, and Robert Scriver's bronzes and other sculptures.

3 MUSEUM OF THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS & AGRICULTURAL CENTER *

Experience the homestead days and Montana agriculture through the ages. Open Memorial weekend through the end of September, 10:30AM to 4:30PM, Monday through Saturday, Noon to 4PM on Sunday. 1205 20th Street (406) 622-5316

- Homestead Village- Early main street in the 1920s.
- Hornaday Gallery- Smithsonian buffalo and original western artwork.
- Overholser Historical Research Center

One admission ticket purchased at any of the attractions includes all museum venues, valid for 2 days. (406) 622-5316 www.fortbentonmuseums.com

* CHARMS AVAILABLE (SEE REVERSE SIDE)