

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY & JUNE

- Visitor's Center and Museums open Memorial weekend
- Spring Classic Fishing Derby
- Summer Celebration, Art on the Levee, Street Dance and Fireworks (last weekend in June)

JULY & AUGUST

- Farmer's Market—July–Sept., Thursdays 5PM to 6PM on the Front St. Levee
- Taste of Chouteau County and Shakespeare in the Park
- Chouteau County Fair & Demolition Derby



WINTER

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



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](http://www.fortbentonchamber.org)  
or call 406.622.3864

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Welcome to the  
BIRTHPLACE of MONTANA

HISTORIC LEGACY

First recorded white visitor when the Lewis & Clark Expedition traversed the area.

1805

First steamboat arrives and makes Fort Benton the innermost port on the Missouri.

1860

Construction is completed on Mullan road, a trade and travel route to the west coast.

Montana becomes a Territory.

1864

Northwest Mounted Police come to Fort Benton and bring law and respectability.

1874

Fort Benton golden decade of river trade begins and most of the brick buildings are constructed during this prosperous period.

1878

The Railroad comes to Fort Benton, ending river trade.

1887

Montana becomes a State.

1889

Drought drives many farmers out of Montana.

1917

1846 Site of Fort Benton established as a fur trading post

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.

1869 U.S. Army purchases fur fort.

The Whoop-Up Trail is established as a profitable whiskey trade route to Canada.

1880 Open range cattle and sheep replace buffalo on the plains.

1888 Fort Benton bridge is built, the first to span the Missouri in Montana.

1908 Homesteaders pour in and agriculture becomes Fort Benton's largest industry.

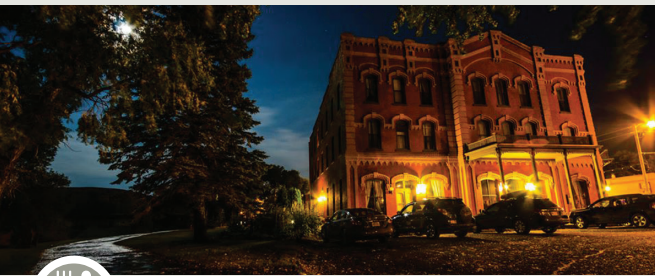
1928 Chouteau County becomes Montana's leading wheat producer.



ACCOMMODATIONS

- |   |   |                |
|---|---|----------------|
| 1 | GRAND UNION HOTEL<br>1 GRAND UNION SQUARE           | (406) 622-1882 |
| 2 | PIONEER LODGE<br>1700 FRONT STREET                  | (406) 622-5441 |
| 3 | THE RIVER HOUSE<br>417 RIVER STREET                 | (406) 622-3238 |
| 4 | 12TH & FRONT AIRBNB<br>1212 FRONT STREET            | (406) 871-4205 |
| 5 | EMILY'S VACATION COTTAGE<br>806 FRANKLIN STREET     | (406) 622-5209 |
| 6 | FRANKLIN STREET GUEST HOUSE<br>1105 FRANKLIN STREET | (406) 733-2261 |
| 7 | CHOUTEAU CO. CAMPGROUND<br>205 FAIRGROUND LOOP      | (406) 622-5505 |
| 8 | BENTON RV<br>2410 CHOUTEAU STREET                   | (406) 622-5015 |
| 9 | D & S RV<br>1012 4TH STREET                         | (406) 622-5104 |

SEE VRBO AND AIRBNB SITES FOR MORE LISTINGS.



RESTAURANTS

- |   |  |                |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | UNION GRILLE<br>1 GRAND UNION SQUARE       | (406) 622-1882 |
| 2 | B SOCIAL BAR & LANES<br>1314 FRONT STREET  | (406) 622-5040 |
| 3 | THE CLUBHOUSE<br>1411 MAIN STREET          | (406) 622-3433 |
| 4 | WAKE CUP COFFEE HOUSE<br>1500 FRONT STREET | (406) 622-5400 |
| 5 | THE PUBLIC HOUSE<br>1714 FRONT STREET      | (406) 622-2406 |
| 6 | MOON EYES COFFEE<br>1714 FRONT STREET      | (406) 399-3694 |
| 7 | THE FREEZE (seasonal)<br>1722 FRONT STREET | (406) 622-5071 |



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 | UPPER MISSOURI CANOE GUIDES                     | (406) 616-2001                   |
| 2 | MISSOURI RIVER OUTFITTERS<br>1856 STATE HWY 387 | 1-866-282-3295                   |
| 3 | MONTANA FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS                   | www.fwp.mt.gov<br>(406) 444-2535 |
| 4 | SIGNAL POINT GOLF CLUB<br>345 SIGNAL POINT ROAD | (406) 622-3666                   |
| 5 | FORT BENTON CITY POOL<br>2010 RIVER STREET      | (406) 622-5494                   |
| 6 | B SOCIAL BAR & LANES<br>1314 FRONT STREET       | (406) 622-5040                   |
| 7 | FREE PUBLIC-USE YELLOW BIKES                    | (406) 622-5040                   |
- Bikes and helmets are provided by Chouteau County Public Health and are located outside the Visitor's Center (1421 FRONT STREET), Chouteau County Library (1518 MAIN STREET), and Canoe Launch (205 FAIRGROUND LOOP). Please ride with care, use helmets, and return bikes to original locations.



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: Brochure design.



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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.)

## LEVEE WALK & HISTORIC DISTRICT

### TRAIL

- MURPHY, NEEL & CO. BUILDING (1880)**  
Originally the mercantile establishment of Murphy, Neel & Company, later becoming Davis Brother's Grocery.
- WELLS FARGO OFFICE (1880)**  
This small brick building was a bank, telegraph office and stage line office.
- 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.
- GRAND UNION HOTEL (1882)**  
Restored in the 1990s after years of neglect, it was known for it's 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.
- 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.
- CHOUTEAU COUNTY COURTHOUSE (1884)**  
Replacing the original courthouse which burned down in 1882. 1308 Franklin Street (406) 622-5151
- 1400 BLOCK—HISTORIC UPRIVER BUSINESSES**  
The first mercantile establishments and hotels were located here; several burned in a fire in 1950.
- 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
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
- BAKER HOUSE (1867)**  
Home of the most powerful trading company in the region. The Bakers and Conrads controlled their vast empire from this unpretentious house.
- 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.
- 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.
- MANDAN REPLICA (1965)**  
A keelboat that was used on the river prior to steamboats. The Mandan was built for the movie *The Big Sky*. The original Mandan's last voyage was in 1921.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- WHOOOP-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.
- 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.
- CENTENNIAL STONE (1946)**  
Commemorative monument to 100 years in Fort Benton.
- RUINS OF OLD FORT BENTON (1846)**  
Only one bastion is left of the original adobe fort. Located inside the reconstructed fort.

## 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 shepherd 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.

- 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.
- SHEP MEMORIAL STATUE (1994)**  
After a memorial service commemorating the 50th anniversary of his passing, the renewed interest in Shep's 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

- 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 9:30AM to 4:30PM daily, from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September. Winter hours by appointment only. 701 River Street (406) 622-4000.
- MUSEUM OF THE UPPER MISSOURI (1957)**  
Early history of the upper river and tales of the toughest river town in the west. Open 10:30AM to 4:30PM, Monday–Saturday, and 12PM to 4PM on Sunday, from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September. Winter hours by appointment only. 1900 River Street (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.
- MUSEUM OF THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS & AGRICULTURAL CENTER**  
Experience the homestead days and Montana agriculture through the ages. Open 10:30AM to 4:30PM, Monday–Saturday, and 12PM to 4PM on Sunday, from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September. Winter hours by appointment only. 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