



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **THE WESTERN LEGACY CENTER IS COMING TO JEFFERSON COUNTY**

*A game changing visitor experience celebrating the legacy of Montana and creating local impact.*

Whitehall, Montana --The Western Legacy Center (WLC) announced its plan to create a viable, vibrant tourism-based enterprise to generate economic and cultural value for Jefferson County. The Western Legacy Center will celebrate Montana's cowboy, cowgirl and rodeo culture and feature other historical themes including railroad, mining, mountain men, and Native American culture. The Center is expected to be in operation by May 2022 in time for the busy tourist season.

"The WLC will offer a 'one of a kind' visitor experience," says Jefferson County Commissioner Leonard Wortman. "Located in the very heart of Montana, it's the perfect time and place for an exciting, inclusive visitor experience that will showcase the dynamic appeal of the Treasure State."

As a historical and cultural visitor center, the WLC will house local and statewide entrepreneurs who sell unique 'Made in Montana' products onsite, coupled with an e-commerce component to drive year-round sales and increase visitation. Many vendors are already positioned to take advantage of this unique business incubation opportunity. It's a 'win-win' for everyone—an enhanced visitor experience to accelerate local business growth, job creation and overall economic development, especially for those most impacted by the pandemic.

"This will be huge for me and the entire community," says Pam Polachi, a Jefferson County-based small business owner. "Montana's enjoying record tourism, and we'll get to participate."

An exciting development is the partnership between the Western Legacy Center and the Montana Pro-Rodeo Hall and Wall of Fame (MPRHWF). Designed to amplify a key aspect of the Center's mission, this serves as a model for other key relationships soon to be announced.

Leveraging the support of MPRHWF and other partners and sponsors, the WLC will have unique hands-on displays and exhibits employing state-of-the-art technology that appeals to all ages. These are envisioned to include:

- A mining exhibition with a 'pan for gold' opportunity and simulators that allow participants to 'drive' mining equipment, excavators and haul trucks.
- Animated displays focused on Native American culture and Montana's storied place in the evolution of the West.
- Integration of a 3-D Visual Center that facilitates virtual participation in rodeo events.
- Futuristic displays showcasing Montana's exciting role in the Innovation Age.

- Hologram visualizations that create separation from traditional static museum presentations.

“There’s literally nothing else quite like the Western Legacy Center,” enthuses Jay Linderman, with the Montana Pro-Rodeo Hall and Wall of Fame. “It’s a first for Montana, and we’re proud to be part of it.”

**About the Western Legacy Center (WLC):** The WLC is a non-profit venue that will provide a unique visitor experience to showcase Montana’s rich heritage and propel the Jefferson County economy. Located in Whitehall, it will celebrate the diverse strengths that define the state’s legacy and drives its future. From interactive ‘hands on’ exhibits and special events to a rich array of local products for purchase, the amazing story of America’s last, best place will be on full display, every day.

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