

2009 SENATE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

SB 2173

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2173

Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 1/22/09

Recorder Job Number: 7556

Committee Clerk Signature

Katie Owsa

Minutes:

Committee was called to order by Senator Dick Dever.

Senator Bowman: SB 2173 does not merit any tax increase, it is not a mandate.

Senator Horne: I like the idea.

Senator Bowman: We want to levy from \$750,000 to \$5,000,000.

Senator Cook: Didn't we go from \$250,000 to \$750,000 last session?

Senator Dever: That was in 2005.

Brian Quigly: For the record my name is Brian Quigly of the Lake County Historical Society.

At this point the digital recorder cut out and did not record the remainder of the hearing.

James Oderman: See testimony #1.

Merl Paaverud: See testimony #2.

There was also testimony given to the clerk that was from various people that were unable to make it to the hearing.

Mary Lee Nielson: See testimony #3.

Dean A. Pearson: See testimony #4.

Leach Byzewski: See attached testimony #5.

Bruce Witmarsh: See attached testimony #6.

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Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Bill/Resolution No. 2173

Hearing Date: 01/22/09

Wes Anderson: See attached testimony #7.

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2173

Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 1/22/09

Recorder Job Number: 7559

Committee Clerk Signature

Katie Oliver

Minutes:

Committee work

Senator Dever: Let's start with the 2 bills we heard this morning. 2173 regarded the county levies for historical works; do we need any more information? There is no fiscal impact to the state on that so it doesn't need to be re referred.

Senator Ohelke: What do you think of the concerns of Ken Tubner relative to the 60%?

Senator Cook: I think that they are justified.

Senator Dever: When we considered this in 2005 we did not pass it, is that right?

Senator Cook: I think that we did pass it and I think that what we gave them was the 3/4 of a mill, but I could go back and check that. The problem is all of the other things that cost money that the county commissioners deal with. A jump all the way to 5 mill is a huge jump.

Senator Dever: In the 2005 session we had several different types of mill levies that we were trying to increase and I don't think that we passes them all but I could share them.

Senator Nelson: The largest seems to be .59% and how they got that I have no idea.

Senator Dever: Then we will set SB2173 aside for now.

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No.2173

Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 01/22/09

Recorder Job Number: 8201

Committee Clerk Signature

Kate Olive

Minutes:

Senator Nelson: There were a lot of people that didn't want to put in a mill levy that was that high.

Senator Oehlke: We had talked about making it 5 mills, not exceeding 5 mills.

Senator Nelson: They went from a quarter to 3 quarters and now they want to go to 5 mills that is a pretty big jump. What would happen if we went to 1 ½ or 2. I just think that 5 is a pretty big jump. The other problem was if they needed a super majority or not.

Senator Dever: We could have an amendment drafted or just leave it the way it is and do it next Thursday.

Senator Oehlke: I don't see why, if it is a good idea, that 60% is a big problem.

Senator Dever: I think on that one we could do whatever we want without having something drafted in advance.

2009 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No.2173

Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 01/22/09

Recorder Job Number: 9382

Committee Clerk Signature

Karen O'Neil

Minutes:

Senator Cook made a motion for a do not pass with a second by Senator Oehlke.

Senator Nelson: What is your rationale for no mill levy's period?

Senator Cook: The rationale is there has been a message that we have heard down in taxation and finance that our purpose is not to raise property taxes but to lower it.

Senator Dever: They have the option to levy out of the general fund if they need to.

Senator Cook: I think that everybody got the mill levy book on county government all of the different functions that they can levy a mill for.

Senator Dever: When we had this bill before was it the same bill or did we pass it and they wanted further change?

Senator Cook: I thought it was a little different.

Roll was taken and the motion passed 3-2 with Senator Cook carrying the bill.

Date: 2/25/01
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2173
Canner
Cool
Committee

Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number

do not know

[Handwritten signature]

Centre[illegible]

Total Yes 3 No 2

Absent

Floor Assignment

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 13, 2009 1:36 p.m.

Module No: SR-29-2667
Carrier: Cook
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2173: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Dever, Chairman)
recommends **DO NOT PASS** (3 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
SB 2173 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2009 HOUSE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

SB 2173

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill No. SB 2173

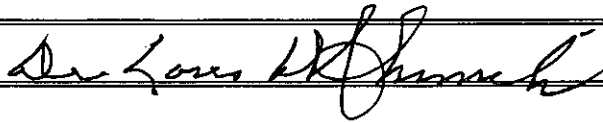
House Political Subdivisions Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: March 5, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 10805

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Wrangham opened the hearing on SB 2173.

Senator Bowman: What this bill says is that by a vote of the people. If you have a project in your county that the historical society says you know we need to raise the money for this. This would allow them to go up to five mills and if they got a majority of the votes they could get this passed. The reason I supported this at a majority vote is because I feel a majority vote is proper. That should be fair to the people in that county. I think it has a lot of merit when you look at rural ND. Rural counties don't have a lot of money when it comes to mills. A mill in Bowman County is \$14,000 so five mills isn't going to break the bank. People that are interested in that type of work give them an opportunity to go out and do something that will benefit the state for years and years to come. After that project is done, they don't have to stay there. It is the kind of bill where a lot of people who are interested in historical things probably doesn't mean much to them, but for those who want to preserve our history and I am glad there are people like that, it is a nice way for them to allow an opportunity to take on a project with the support of the people and to their tax money to take this project on and complete it. That is basically the jest of the bill.

Rep. Klemin: Can the county commissioner levy this tax or can they do it on their own. To my knowledge there is a limit on what they currently levy and in order to increase that levy it

has to go to the vote of the people. I think the levy is 1.5 to go up to 5 so it has to go to the vote of the people.

Rep. Jerry Kelsh: It has to go to a vote of the people if they want to go up a .25 mill levy.

Is this the only place in county laws that they would have to go to 60% other than a simple majority, do you know?

Senator Bowman: I think a simple majority is fair. This will benefit everybody.

Rep. Klemin: We are hearing two parts of this bill. One is an increase to 60% and whether to increase the mill. On the first part I think 60% versus the majority; why do you want to do this?

Senator Bowman: Have you ever lived in a rural community that doesn't have a lot of money? Some of these counties are really desperate. They don't have a lot of extra money, but if they have the majority of people in that county that is a major accomplishment to get it. If the majority of people voted to get it to four mills that would be another major accomplishment. If you are going to do anything of any significance you have enough money to do something because a mill doesn't raise a lot of dollars so it is hard. The trust is any rural small county is struggling and yet if there is something important the majority of people should be respected. I don't think that is a problem.

Rep. Koppelman: I think what the bill is saying is that the county commission can vote to vote for up to five mills? Am I missing that and anything over that?? The Board of county commissioners may levy a tax not exceeding the limitation of subsection 8, Section 57-1506.7 which is the bottom? In other words they could levy a tax up to that amount. I think I have it figured out now.

Senator Bowman: Line 15 may be resolution submit the question to the tax payers. So it is asking the people to vote on the tax.

Rep. Headland: It is currently 60% of the qualified electors that vote so if we move it to a majority of the people that vote; 20% of the qualified electors would reside could essentially pass this increase. Those are some of the reasons why they want 60% because they want to make sure there is a strong enough majority of the people that show up to vote to clearly indicate the wishes. I have some reservations about moving that. Fifty percent of the people that show up to vote can be a problem.

Senator Bowman: I would say to the other 30% that didn't show up to vote, they are the only ones to blame, but themselves. If you have to force people to vote on an issue; they know what it does. It is presented to the people in that county. If they don't want it to pass they will be there.

Rep. Headland: For the purpose of getting a tax increase passed the burden should be on the people who want it passed to show up and vote; not the people who don't pay attention. If you left it at 60% then the people that want it passed would have to work to make sure that all the electors that resided in the county understood what they needed to come and vote for if they wanted to pass it. When you lower it to 50% if 20% of the qualified people that reside in the county can come and half of them pass it; then the burden of the need for it really is not placed on the people who want it. The real burden then is on the few people that might understand what is going to happen and then them getting out the vote deny the increase I think that is why it is placed at 60% now.

Senator Bowman: People when it comes to your taxes in rural ND they are pretty careful and if you say we are going to increase your mills they are going to want to know why. There is no excuse if the people who don't want it don't come and vote.

Rep. Zaiser: It is my recollection that we changed this last session not sure from what? When it was last changed?

Senator Bowman: I can't answer that question. I think it was introduced, but did not get passed.

Chairman Wrangham: I know you have done a lot of work across the state with mills and the disparity with mills and what they are worth. It seems to me that there should be some kind of sliding scale. The mills that the local entities could levy should be based somehow on the amount of money they raise. I don't know if you have had any experience or dealt with that in your legislative career?

Senator Bowman: A mill levy for Cass County is \$400,000. The lowest county is \$250. So it gives you an idea that how you correctly ask the voters for money other than by a resolution allowing the voters to know what they are voting on. Because the county commissioner's aren't going to ask for five mills in Cass County for a \$75,000 project. That is their responsibility to represent the request properly through the voters and in our county I know one mill levy represents \$15,000.

Rep. Kilichowski: When we have put something on the ballot and let's say our mill levy is \$30,000 and we need \$50,000 it would start out that way and 1 2/3 mill. Adjust the mill to the amount of money that you need for this project and that is what they vote on. They don't just vote for the whole 5 mills.

James Odermann: Volunteer with the Museums in ND. (see testimony #1).

(Also handed out Testimony #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9). The questions had been asked earlier when this bill was changed and I know it was previous to 2005. There has to be some individual and county government responsibility amongst our voters to make sure they are informed as to what is happening within their county. We are a county form of government and it has worked for over a hundred years in ND. We certainly feel that because of the area, especially where the evaluations are low, these issues are a real problem.

Rep. Koppelman: What elections do these questions usually get on the ballot, is it primary or general elections? If the county would put something like this to a vote.

James Odermann: It is up to the county in which the election takes place.

Claudia Berg: Member of State Historical Society: (handed out testimony #10).

We do work with 140 counties across the state. Most of them are run by volunteers. On the issue of the majority for voting; most organizations are volunteer run and there is a large difference in Barnes County. This county is small and they don't have the money. It is a budget issue and there is only a certain amount of time they have to put into this.

Jenny Youis: (see testimony #11). Handed out letter from Rick Young and read it.

Rep. Conrad: In Ward County we have 8 museums. What plan does the State Historical Society have for these smaller museums as their supporters are not able to take care of them?

Without these kinds of dollars how are they going to be taken care of?

Claudia Berg: There is an agreement with the county historical society with the State Historical Society. The other historical organization within that county should affiliate with that county historical society. We do support the county if they end up in trouble and closing their doors. The State Historical Society becomes responsible for that County Historical Society's operation and collections. The County Historical Societies should allow them to handle their county. An example is if they find themselves in trouble with a leaky roof and can't fix it or something like this; the county could be in a position that they could help them. A re grants program that we have been fortunate to have over the last three biennials has made a huge difference for all those county and local museums. It has given them the funding. \$5,000 can operate them for a year. \$10,000 can stabilize their foundations if they begin to crumble.

Having the mill levy so they can do that cash match they need. Those are the two financial forces that most of these organizations have. We go out and give workshops and help the

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House Political Subdivisions Committee

Bill No. SB 2173

Hearing Date: March 5, 2009

organization deal with the collections and exhibits. That is part of our outreach and responsibilities.

Opposition: None

Neutral: None

Hearing closed.

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill No. SB 2173

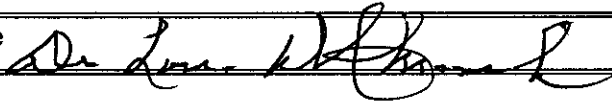
House Political Subdivisions Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: March 19, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 11256

Committee Clerk Signature



Minutes:

Chairman Wrangham reopened the hearing on SB 2173.

Discussion:

Rep. Headland: I did have a conversation with Marcy Dickerson about the 60% and it is all over the board. She can find several places where 60% of the vote; and several places a simple majority are needed so there is really no one direction so it just depends on what you are dealing with.

Do Pass Motion Made By Rep. Nancy Johnson: Seconded By Rep. Conrad

Discussion:

Chairman Wrangham: As I recall this bill not only lowers it from 60% to a simple majority but also increases from $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mill to 5 mills to pass.

Rep. Conrad: In Bowman County it is \$14,000 for one mill so five mills is \$75,000. Cass County five mills is \$100,000.

Rep. Koppelman: What does the State Historical Society do compared to the county? Do they work together and do all counties have them?

Rep. Conrad: You have to levy them. Some the commissioners decide who gets money.

Some museums are identified as a county museum and others are identified as something else and the county gives money to the identified counties.

Rep. Koppelman: Do they work together with the state?

Rep. Zaiser: I understand that the State Historical Society will take their share of information from local historical societies and encourage it to tourism and that is when the State Historical Society and Heritage Center and I believe the counties roll is to encourage and distribute.

Rep. Koppelman: with the trail bill is that something where they work together?

Rep. Headland: I am going to reject the do pass simply because I would have rather moved it back to a 60% vote. I think in these areas the burden of passage should be placed on the people that are trying to get the initiative passed versus the burden be placed on someone to be sure they show up to vote.

Rep. Nancy Johnson: I am a firm believer in the majority rules and if it is 50.1% that is sufficient. If you don't want to get to the polls that is your problem.

Vote: 9 Yes 4 No 0 Absent **Carrier: Rep. Zaiser:**

Hearing closed.

Date: 3-19
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2173

HOUSE POLITICAL SUBS COMMITTEE

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken ☒ DP ☐ DNP ☐ DP AS AMEND ☐ DNP AS AMEND

Motion Made By Rep. Johnson Seconded By Rep. Conrad

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Ch. Wrangham		✓	Rep. Conrad	✓	
Vice Chair Rep. Headland		✓	Rep. Kelsh	✓	
Rep. Hatlestad	✓		Rep. Kilichowski	✓	
Rep. N. Johnson	✓		Rep. Mock	✓	
Rep. Klemin		✓	Rep. Zaiser	✓	
Rep. Koppelman		✓			
Rep. Kretschmar	✓				
Rep. Pietsch	✓				

Total (Yes) 9 No 4

Absent 0

Floor Carrier: Rep. Zaiser

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 19, 2009 12:44 p.m.

Module No: HR-50-5352
Carrier: Zaiser
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2173: Political Subdivisions Committee (Rep. Wrangham, Chairman) recommends
DO PASS (9 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2173 was placed
on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

SB 2173

The logo for MIND Museums in North Dakota features the word "MIND" in a large, stylized serif font. The letter "i" is lowercase and has a dot that forms the top of a classical building's pediment. Below "MIND" are the words "Museums in North Dakota" in a smaller, clean sans-serif font. At the bottom, the tagline "We Value North Dakota's Heritage and Culture" is written in an italicized sans-serif font.

MIND

Museums in North Dakota

We Value North Dakota's Heritage and Culture

Testimony to Senate Government & Veterans Affairs Committee
RE: Senate Bill 2173
January 22, 2009

Good morning. For the record, my name is James Odermann. I am a member of the board of directors of the Museums in North Dakota, a statewide organization of museum professionals.

Senate Bill 2173 is self-help legislation, which will allow the hundreds of museum professionals from 175 museums in North Dakota the tools for survival. We need to overcome the misnomer that museums and historical societies are a place for relics and memories of the past.

While North Dakota's museums are a repository for all things great and old, this is only half of the equation. North Dakota county, city and private museums connect us with our past and at the same time tell us about the courage, fortitude and true grit that made North Dakota. We cannot forget that and we need to create situations where the pioneer spirit of the past becomes the baseline to move us to the next frontier.

The infrastructure is aging. The need for additional space for artifact storage exists. The technology of the day beckons. Current state statute handicaps counties and communities dedicated to mixing a proper dose of the past with the present so we can have a bright future. The three-fourths of a mill cap may be okay for counties that have high taxable valuations but it is not fair to those who need and want to create opportunities.

I refer to the chart on the back of this sheet, especially the counties that are shaded.

Friends, don't get me wrong. I am not here to ask for higher taxes. I am here merely to ask that you allow local county historical societies more latitude to do their job properly. The people of the local county have to be on board. This situation would create benefits for historical societies in two ways:

1. Increasing the cap would allow local historical societies an opportunity to plan for improvement and/or construction of facilities, equipment and care of museum contents.
2. Revenue generated from increasing the cap could be used to leverage funding available through the State Historical Society Cultural Heritage Grant Program. Local in-kind or cash matches are necessary to qualify for up to \$10,000 in grant funds.

We cannot live in the past, which is why we need to be current with legislation that will allow for us to properly transcend the line between dreams and reality. It is because of this that the Museums in North Dakota, on behalf of its members and the showcasing of our history and heritage, ask that you recommend a "do pass" on Senate Bill 2173.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions

2005 County Historical Society Mill Levy Table

(Not all counties included in this illustration)

*Same
handout
given to
House.*

County	05 Mill Levy	05 Taxable Valuation	05 Levy Revenue	If 2 mills	If 3 mills	if 4 mills	If 5 mills
Adams	0.75	\$7,090,343	5,317.76	14,180.69	\$21,271.03	\$28,361.37	\$35,451.72
Billings	0.49	\$4,988,509	2,444.37	9,977.02	\$14,965.53	\$19,954.04	\$24,942.55
Burleigh		\$171,148,847	\$-				
Cass		\$357,775,914	\$-				
Grand Forks	0.25	\$147,923,914	\$36,980.98	\$295,847.83	\$443,771.74	\$591,695.66	\$739,619.57
McLean	0.25	\$26,453,687	\$6,613.42	\$52,907.37	\$79,361.06	\$105,814.75	\$132,268.44
Mercer	0.25	\$18,461,117	\$4,615.28	\$36,922.23	\$55,383.35	\$73,844.47	\$92,305.59
Morton	0.25	\$58,294,903	\$14,573.73	\$116,589.81	\$174,884.71	\$233,179.61	\$291,474.52
Oliver	0.25	\$5,452,936	\$1,363.23	\$10,905.87	\$16,358.81	\$21,811.74	\$27,264.68
Pembina	0.25	\$29,832,498	\$7,458.12	\$59,665.00	\$89,497.49	\$119,329.99	\$149,162.49
Richland	0.25	\$49,104,933	\$12,276.23	\$98,209.87	\$147,314.80	\$196,419.73	\$245,524.67
Rolette	0.3	\$9,740,775	\$2,922.23	\$19,481.55	\$29,222.33	\$38,963.10	\$48,703.88
Sargent	0.25	\$15,044,530	\$3,761.13	\$30,089.06	\$45,133.59	\$60,178.12	\$75,222.65
Sheridan	0.39	\$6,233,130	\$2,430.92	\$12,466.26	\$18,699.39	\$24,932.52	\$31,165.65
Stutsman	0.24	\$50,889,665	\$12,213.52	\$101,779.33	\$152,669.00	\$203,558.66	\$254,448.33
Towner	0.34	\$11,438,529	\$3,889.10	\$22,877.06	\$34,315.59	\$45,754.12	\$57,192.65
Traill	0.48	\$25,772,240	\$12,370.68	\$51,544.48	\$77,316.72	\$103,088.96	\$128,861.20
Walsh	0.25	\$31,260,549	\$7,815.14	\$62,521.10	\$93,781.65	\$125,042.20	\$156,302.75
Ward	0.19	\$115,193,059	\$21,886.68	\$230,386.12	\$345,579.18	\$460,772.24	\$575,965.30
Wells	0.26	\$17,551,637	\$4,563.43	\$35,103.27	\$52,654.91	\$70,206.55	\$87,758.19
Williams	0.46	\$38,014,404	\$17,486.63	\$76,028.81	\$114,043.21	\$152,057.62	\$190,072.02

Source: North Dakota Tax Department, 2005 Property Tax Statistical Report

James A. Odermann
2767 129h Ave. SW
Belfield, ND 58622-9330
701-575-4767
odermann@goesp.com

SB 2173
Senate Government and Veterans Affairs
January 22, 2009

Testimony by Merl Paaverud
State Historical Society of North Dakota

Chairman Dever and members of the Committee, my name is Merl Paaverud and I am the director of the State Historical Society of North Dakota. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony for SB 2173 today.

North Dakota is fortunate to possess a great respect for its people and their history. The stories that are part of our past provide information about who we are and how we have gotten to this place in our lives. We also use this information as a lesson to help us in our decision making and learn what makes our society and cultures tick.

Local and county historical societies are an important part in the fabric of our towns and villages across the state. Residents have taken it upon themselves to gather and keep pictures, newspapers, artifacts, and items of interest for many years. Many of these people are volunteers who give of their time and resources to make sure that their history is not lost or forgotten. They are the front line workers who take care of everything from cleaning to being tour guides.

The majority of these groups have a very small budget and make ends meet through donations, sales of pies and perhaps through a museum gift shop or second hand store. They work hard to find the money they need primarily to stay open and do their best to add as much as they can for their visitors. The value of what they offer is hard to determine, but they know it has value when school children come and marvel at what they have to show them. Visitors from around the world find their ways to these places to learn and to envy what they see.

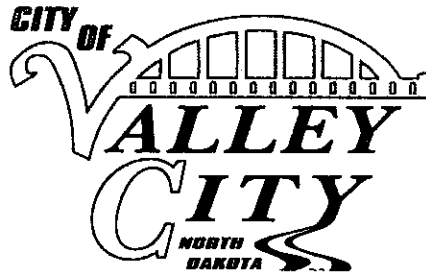
The outcome of their work is having a sense of accomplishment that is realized when they give a former resident, family member, friend, stranger or teacher a chance to see what the world is all about in that town and county. I have experienced that feeling since my career started out in a small museum operation in Steele County, North Dakota.

I think that SB 2173 will give these good people a chance for support and success as they continue their work. They believe in what they are doing. We should be proud of them.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

City Hall
254 2nd Ave NE
PO Box 390
Valley City, ND 58072-0390



Phone: 701-845-1700
Fax: 701-845-4588
www.valleycity.govoffice.com

January 21, 2009

*Same to
given to
House.*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of SB2173. This is a very important bill for our area historical societies. In our most recent election the voters of Barnes County overwhelmingly supported increasing the levy for the Barnes County Historical Society. The citizens saw the need and appreciate the projects of the local historical societies. The vote was 72% in favor of increasing the levy.

It took three elections to get the much needed monies to help keep the area museums afloat. The vote was favorable in two of the three elections but the issue of having a super majority was costly to the organizations. It makes sense to have a simple majority.

Please give your support to historical works in North Dakota. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Lee Nelson

Mayor, City of Valley City

Bowman County Historical and Genealogical Society
Pioneer Trails Regional Museum
12 First Avenue NE P.O. Box 78
Bowman, North Dakota 58623

January 19, 2009

*Same
given to
House.*

Members of the Government & Veterans Affairs Committee

RE: Senate Bill 2173

Committee Members;

I am writing you this letter to ask for your support for Senate Bill 2173 as it concerns Local Historical Societies.

Currently, North Dakota Law only allows for a maximum of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mill to be expended by the County Commission for support of Historical Societies and or Museums. This can be increased to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mill if it is brought to a local vote and passes by a 60% margin.

With the increased costs of operating Museums and Historical Societies, and these being a large part of what North Dakota is promoting for tourism, additional funding sources are required. Museums are currently doing all they can to continue to provide a means and venue for displaying, promoting and preserving each areas local history, but it is getting harder to do this and yet still provide an accommodation for tourists to want to stop and visit.

What Senate Bill 2173 would permit is for the State Legislature to allow the county to place a measure on the local ballot for historical support without the limitation to funding that is in place now. The current law ties all funding to the value of a mill which is not equitable when you compare large and small communities. Being from a small, rural, western county our funding capability under the current law is limited to the maximum value of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mill (about \$3,300) and could only be increased to a maximum of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mill after a vote of 60% of the people (which equates to about \$10,000). When this is compared to other larger counties we have very little money to work with. We understand that there needs to be an upper limit as to what is allowable by law, but it needs to be raised above the current levels.

Again, I strongly urge you to support the changes to current law that are before you today in Senate Bill 2173. Thank you for your time in this important matter.

Sincerely;

Dean A. Pearson, President
Pioneer Trails Regional Museum
Bowman County Historical Society

Same given to House.

Testimony to Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee January 22, 2009 – Missouri River Room

Grand Forks County Historical Society Supports Passage of SB 2173

Our county historical societies protect and preserve the material history of North Dakota. Staffed by a few dedicated professionals and volunteers, on shoe-string budgets, historical societies work to preserve our history for future generations, but these individuals' dedication alone is not enough. Many of our state's irreplaceable artifacts are in danger of deterioration, because climate controlled storage facilities are beyond the economic means of these financially challenged organizations.

The State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) does an excellent job of preserving documents and artifacts that have state-wide significance. At the county level, however, our historical societies struggle to perform the same service with far fewer resources. Like our pioneer ancestors, dedicated volunteers make-do with the facilities that they have, however time is working against them, and once an artifact or photograph is damaged or destroyed the harm cannot be undone. SHSND is not equipped with the necessary space or staff to take possession of thousands of vulnerable artifacts, nor should the materials be removed from the counties in which their significance is most relevant. Each county has a unique history with significant differences in culture, politics and economic development which their documents and artifacts represent.

Beyond preservation, however, our county historical societies manage to operate outstanding community museums. These museums benefit our states thriving tourism industry. Heritage tourism, in particular, relies upon the expertise of our dedicated county museum volunteers whose unique knowledge of their county directs visitors to country churches, cemeteries and other significant landmarks of interest to genealogists searching for their family roots in North Dakota. As our tourism industry grows, demand for these services from county historical societies will grow also. Strengthening our county historical societies, therefore, benefits all of North Dakota.

If passed, SB 2173 will allow county historical societies the opportunity to present their case for increased funding to county voters with a majority vote determining the measure's outcome. It will still be the county historical society's responsibility to demonstrate its need for additional funding to the satisfaction of county voters. By passing this bill, the State is not imposing upon our counties any sort of tax increase; county voters retain the power to decide for themselves what value they place on their history and its preservation for future generations.

Leah Byzewski
Director, Grand Forks County Historical Society
Director and Secretary, Museums in North Dakota

TESTIMONY
Government Affairs Committee
January 22, 2009

Presented by:

Bruce Whitmarsh, Director
Bonanzaville

I believe that this bill would allow for great flexibility for both historic organizations and the general public. The Cass County Historical Society does currently receive significant funding from the Cass County general fund, \$60,000 for 2009 approximately 20% of our budget.

Because of this, I do not anticipate in the near term any effort on our part to try for a levy, but I like the option of being able to go to the voters for direct support and of being able to receive reasonably high enough levels of support to make that effort worthwhile in terms of dollars received to further support the museum and our mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue. I ask for your favorable report on Senate Bill 2173.

Testimony, Supporting Senate Bill 2173
Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
January 22, 2009

Offered by: Wes Anderson, Director
Barnes County Historical Society
315 Central Ave N
Valley City, ND 58072
701-845-0966

Come to House

In June 2008, the people of Barnes County voted an astonishing 73% positive to pass the ½ mil increase for the museums of Barnes County. As the largest and only full time professional museum in the county, the Barnes County Historical Society in Valley City is designated the official county museum. The Society has pledged \$1000 annually to be given to both the Wimbledon and Litchville Community Museums to insure that their collections stay maintained where they are. This was the fifth attempt in ten years that the Society asked the voters for this mil increase.

Since its establishment in 1930 in a room on the third floor of the courthouse, the Barnes County Historical Society first asked for the available commission support of ¼ mil when it was forced to relocate to another location in 1990. With its most recent relocation to downtown in 1997 and public opening in June 1998, the Society took a dramatic leap forward in activity but did not have the public awareness required to garner public support in its first attempt in 1998 to ask the voters for more funding. It received only 48% of the vote. With more visible activity and by playing a larger role in the county the Society received 51% in 2000, 53% in 2002 and 52% in 2004; all above the simple majority but much under the 60% requirement set by state century code.

This positive vote allows the Barnes County Commissioners to provide up to ¾ of a mil that would generate approximately \$30,000 annually for the Society. If fully funded it means that the Society's budget seen an increase from \$50,000 to \$60,000 still allowing for at least \$1,000 each to go annually to the Wimbledon and Litchville museums nearly doubling their current budgets. BCHS was

getting approximately \$8,000 as ¼ of a mil. The remainder of the budget came from the initial rental, and later sale, of its former location that provided \$12,000 annually. With the completion of the sale in June 2007, the Society was dipping into reserves and about out of other funding options. It was getting nearly impossible to further cut corners without making severe changes and hard decisions that would drastically affect staffing and operations of the organization. The 2008 vote takes immense pressures off the shoulders of the board, staff and volunteers of the Barnes County Historical Society allowing it and the other museums in the county to better serve the community for years to come.

The Barnes County Historical Society encourages the changes in the century code proposed by SB 2173 to both allow for a simple majority vote and increase the mil allotment allowed. Ten years was spent in this final effort to at last maintain some financial stability for the museums in Barnes County. This took thousands of dollars from the already limited budget and countless hours on the part of volunteers and staff. It was the culmination of a concerted effort among the organizations to educate the public to what a mil is and the minimal costs involved vs. the larger value provided by these museums. The Museums of Barnes County are a great example of what can be done over time and with perseverance, but it was also most likely the last attempt. Had it not passed, the hours open would have been greatly reduced and the full time director would have been reduced to half time or solely volunteer returning it to worse than its pre 1997 condition having a much larger facility to try to maintain. The vote came in the nick of time for us.

Mils are not equal across the state of North Dakota. Eastern counties have a much higher valued mil in comparison to those in the western part of the state where a mil might only be \$1500. The voters would have the sense to govern the need of the museum in their county and the commissioners would also have control on any allotment allowed by a vote. The proposed SB 2173 makes the system more accessible to encourage Historical Works in North Dakota.



#1

Museums in North Dakota

We Value North Dakota's Heritage and Culture

Testimony to House Political Subdivisions Committee
RE: Senate Bill 2173
March 12, 2009

Good morning. For the record, my name is James Odermann. I am a volunteer with the Museums in North Dakota, serving on the board of directors and trying to find solutions for the preservation of the heritage, history and culture of our local areas. I also assist with the MiND newsletter (which is attached).

There are about 175 museums in North Dakota. These museum staffs are assisted by many dedicated volunteers who place a high value on the artifacts, events and heritage of each of North Dakota's 53 counties. These volunteers need Senate Bill 2173 because it can provide an avenue for revenue within a local area.

SB 2173 is self-help legislation that will allow county residents an opportunity to address preservation issues. This legislation calls for communities to work together for the common good to meet the demands of an aging infrastructure. The need for additional space for artifact storage exists. The technology of the day beckons.

Current state statute handicaps counties and communities dedicated to mixing a proper dose of the past with the present so we can have a bright future. The three-fourths of a mill cap may be okay for counties that have high taxable valuations but it creates major challenges for those counties with lower taxable valuations, especially those who need and want to properly care for artifacts and create economic opportunity through heritage tourism.

Senate Bill 2173 requires the people of the local county to be on board. This situation would create benefits for historical societies in two ways:

1. Increasing the cap would allow local historical societies an opportunity to plan for improvement and/or construction of facilities, equipment and care of museum contents.
2. In HB 1018, the House of Representatives this session has proposed increasing the State Historical Society Cultural Heritage Grant Program to \$504,500. The Cultural Heritage Grant Program calls for a local in-kind or cash match to qualify for up to \$10,000 in grant funds. This legislation is one way to "double" the value of that grant program

On the back of this sheet is a "what-if" scenario based on 2005 taxable valuations. Some of the counties are highlighted to give you an idea of how different values would provide a revenue stream.

I would ask for your support of SB 2173. Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions

July-August-September 2006

MiND to discuss mill levy limits

Discussion will lay groundwork for 2009 legislative action

Adams County has the highest mill levy for historical society work in all of the 53 North Dakota counties but it ranks in the bottom half of total revenue collected from the county. Grand Forks County receives the most total dollars from the mill levy collection. The data is from the North Dakota Tax Department.

Adams County residents pay three-fourths of one mill. Eddy County is second with .59 mills, followed by Billings County at .49 mills, Traill County at .48 mills and Emmons County at .47 mills. In total

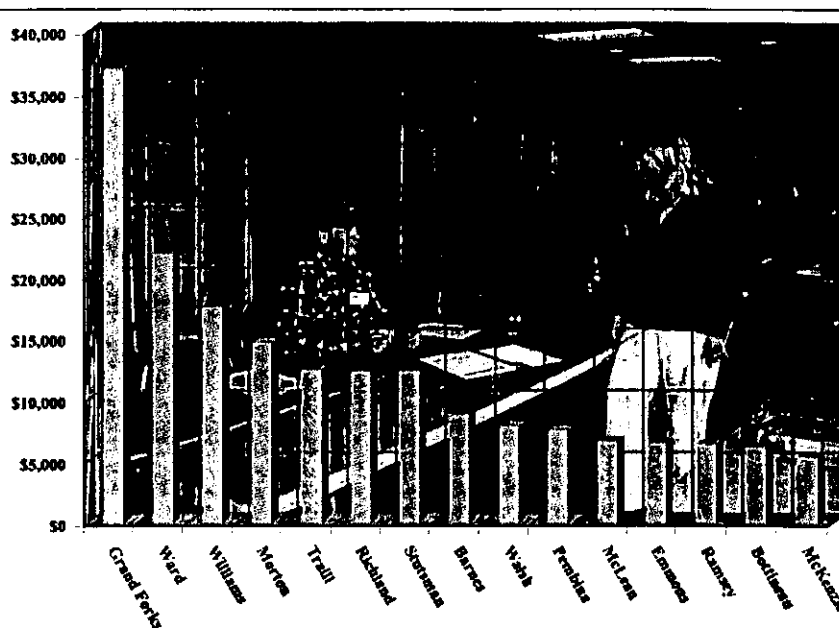
This MiND report is a result of a desire to ask legislators to increase the cap for historical preservation within North Dakota counties. At present, the North Dakota Century Code only allows counties to issue one-fourth a mill for historical society work unless voters, by a sixty per cent majority approve an increase. At the present time, the maximum amount of levy that voters can assess themselves is .75 mills.

In the 2005 legislative sessions, a bill to remove what Museums in North Dakota President Dorothy Pearson of Bowman called "the super majority" was defeated. The 2005 proposal would have changed the 60 per cent majority to a simple majority.

Another part of the 2005 proposal would have increased the maximum levy possible from four mills to five mills. Dean Pearson, tax director for Bowman County, was the only person to testify in favor of the legislation.

An attempt to get a similar bill entered in the 2007 legislative session was unsuccessful. Dorothy Pearson said the MiND Board of Directors would be discussing the issue at future board meetings "because this is an issue that is important to all North Dakotans."

Dorothy Pearson said the proposal would not mean any new taxation to anybody "unless the voters in a county wanted to dedicate some revenue to preservation and care of historical artifacts. The proposal that I will ask the MiND Board of



This graph shows the 15 counties in North Dakota with the highest mill levy for support of historical preservation and artifacts. Chris Sand and Annette Schilling visited at the 2006 MiND Annual Meeting in Medora.

Directors to discuss and pursue for the 2009 legislative session will be very similar to the one proposed for the 2005 session."

Miscommunication over the legislative calendar deadlines resulted in the legislation not getting introduced in the 2007 session, Dorothy Pearson said. She noted the issue would be discussed at future board meetings "and hopefully we can develop a strategy for the 2009 session."

In the meantime, a review of the mill levy rates for all of the 53 counties has revealed that nine counties have no mill levy for historical preservation. Twenty-eight counties have the maximum allowable mill levy (.25) without a vote and the remaining 16 counties have a levy that would have required a vote of the county residents in the past.

Go To **NO MILL LEVY**
(Continued on next page)

No mill levy in 9 counties

(continued from page 1)

The nine counties that do not have a mill levy are Benson, Bowman, Burleigh, Cass, Kidder, McHenry, Sioux, Slope and Stark. This does not, however, mean that the counties do not receive any county funding. Stark County is an example where the county commissioners provide general fund monies for historical societies and heritage preservation.

The MiND Newsletter will continue to research this project and will provide additional information to its membership for future planning.

A detailed breakdown of the county by county mill levies is shown in Table 1-1 (right) and on graphics of maps on page 5. ■



Board of Directors

Deah Byzewski, Grand Forks
Barbara McCormick, Devils Lake
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James Odermann, Belfield

If you are interested in joining the MiND Board of Directors, please contact President Dorothy Pearson:

Phone: (701) 523-3835

dpearson@ndsupernet.com

The MiND newsletter is published by Museums in North Dakota. Please send your contributions, announcements, photographs, job listings, grant opportunities, ideas for articles, and membership correspondence to:

James A. Odermann, editor
2767 129th Ave. SW
Belfield, ND 58622-9330
701-575-4767
odermann@goesp.com

Table 1-1

2005 County Historical Society Mill Levy Table

County	05 Mill State Levy Rank	05 Taxable Valuation	State Rank	05 Levy Revenue	State Rank
Adams	0.75 1	\$7,090,343	45	\$5,317.76	16
Barnes	0.25 17	\$35,106,456	10	\$8,776.61	8
Benson	45	\$12,886,129	29	\$-	45
Billings	0.49 3	\$4,988,509	52	\$2,444.37	36
Bottineau	0.24 40	\$25,517,224	15	\$6,124.13	14
Bowman	45	\$9,665,149	38	\$-	45
Burke	0.23 42	\$8,621,458	43	\$1,982.94	42
Burleigh	45	\$171,148,847	2	\$-	45
Cass	45	\$357,775,914	1	\$-	45
Cavalier	0.25 17	\$20,190,073	18	\$5,047.52	17
Dickey	0.25 17	\$16,350,186	23	\$4,087.55	22
Divide	0.29 15	\$9,158,546	41	\$2,655.98	34
Dunn	0.25 17	\$12,722,410	30	\$3,180.60	30
Eddy	0.59 2	\$6,306,157	47	\$3,720.63	27
Emmons	0.47 5	\$13,651,558	27	\$6,416.23	12
Foster	0.25 17	\$12,504,479	31	\$3,126.12	31
Golden Valley	0.25 17	\$5,505,189	49	\$1,376.30	43
Grand Forks	0.25 17	\$147,923,914	3	\$36,980.98	1
Grant	0.25 17	\$7,965,635	44	\$1,991.41	41
Griggs	0.25 17	\$8,762,852	42	\$2,190.71	40
Hettinger	0.36 8	\$9,263,938	40	\$3,335.02	29
Kidder	45	\$9,494,888	39	\$-	45
Lamoure	0.25 17	\$17,566,028	20	\$4,391.51	21
Logan	0.34 10	\$6,486,807	46	\$2,205.51	39
McHenry	45	\$21,432,334	17	\$-	45
McIntosh	0.25 17	\$9,705,405	37	\$2,426.35	38
McKenzie	0.32 13	\$16,652,524	22	\$5,328.81	15
McLean	0.25 17	\$26,453,687	13	\$6,613.42	11
Mercer	0.25 17	\$18,461,117	19	\$4,615.28	18
Morton	0.25 17	\$58,294,903	5	\$14,573.73	4
Mountrail	0.23 43	\$15,110,075	25	\$3,475.32	28
Nelson	0.25 17	\$10,990,507	33	\$2,747.63	33
Oliver	0.25 17	\$5,452,936	50	\$1,363.23	44
Pembina	0.25 17	\$29,832,498	12	\$7,458.12	10
Pierce	0.33 12	\$13,578,137	28	\$4,480.79	20
Ramsey	0.25 17	\$25,487,811	16	\$6,371.95	13
Ransom	0.25 17	\$16,336,201	24	\$4,084.05	23
Renville	0.25 17	\$10,003,320	35	\$2,500.83	35
Richland	0.25 17	\$49,104,933	7	\$12,276.23	6
Rolette	0.30 14	\$9,740,775	36	\$2,922.23	32
Sargent	0.25 17	\$15,044,530	26	\$3,761.13	26
Sheridan	0.39 7	\$6,233,130	48	\$2,430.92	37
Sioux	45	\$2,050,855	53	\$-	45
Slope	45	\$5,117,746	51	\$-	45
Stark	45	\$40,254,067	8	\$-	45
Steele	0.36 9	\$10,562,451	34	\$3,802.48	25
Stutsman	0.24 41	\$50,889,665	6	\$12,213.52	7
Towner	0.34 11	\$11,438,529	32	\$3,889.10	24
Traill	0.48 4	\$25,772,240	14	\$12,370.68	5
Walsh	0.25 17	\$31,260,549	11	\$7,815.14	9
Ward	0.19 44	\$115,193,059	4	\$21,886.68	2
Wells	0.26 16	\$17,551,637	21	\$4,563.43	19
Williams	0.46 6	\$38,014,404	9	\$17,486.63	3

Source: North Dakota Tax Department, 2005 Property Tax Statistical Report ■

MiND Organizational Plan

The Museums in North Dakota board of directors reviewed its planning goals, objectives and action steps at a recent meeting in Bismarck. The committee identified seven specific area where action is needed for the coming year (listed in bold in the following text). The status report of the item(s) is shown in the right hand column.

Individuals who want to work on the particular action items should contact MiND President Dorothy Pearson by email (dpearson@ndsupernet.com) or by phone 701-440-0688.

MISSION: Uphold the value of North Dakota's heritage and cultural assets

VISION: Promote and facilitate cooperation and communication among museums, museum workers, and related organizations and advance professional standards within the museum field.

DEFINITION OF "MUSEUM": An organized and permanent institution with a staff (paid or unpaid). A museum is essentially educational in nature, owns or utilizes tangible objects or living objects, cares for them, and exhibits them to the public on some regular basis. Museums may include but are not limited to: local, tribal, state, regional and national museums, cultural and historic sites, zoos, science centers, parks, art museums and non-profit galleries, children's museums, etc.

I. Collaborate and cooperate with other similar in-state cultural organizations.

- | | |
|---|------|
| A. Host a joint meeting of all cultural organizations in North Dakota to continue dialogue and discussion common issues. | done |
| 1. Invite cultural organizations to a roundtable discussion during the North Dakota Tourism Conference in 2002. | done |
| 2. Invite cultural organizations to a roundtable discussion during the 2007 Mountain Plains Museum Association Meeting in Fargo | |

action step

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 3. Implement and tabulate a pre-meeting survey of cultural organizations state-wide. | done |
| B. Network with other cultural organizations in North Dakota. | |
| 1. Promote and expand usage of the Museum-Work listserv. | ongoing |
| 2. Participate in other cultural organizations workshops and meetings. | ongoing |
| 3. Share information with MIND members through the MIND newsletter and Web site, Museum-Work listserv, and during workshops and meetings. | |

ongoing

II. Improve visibility of MIND and museums state-wide.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| A. Maintain a promotional package for the MIND organization. | ongoing |
| 1. Develop a new MIND logo, letterhead, newsletter mast, and press release letterhead. | done |
| 2. Develop and maintain a MIND Web site. | action step |
| 3. Update a MIND membership brochure. | action step |
| 4. Promote MIND through table display Observe museum brochures for display. | action step |
| 5. Develop a format for MIND press releases. | done |
| 6. Publicize MIND activities and its members through press releases. | action step |
| 7. Systematically promote MIND through other cultural organizations. | ongoing |

- | | |
|---|---------|
| B. Publish the MIND newsletter. | ongoing |
| 1. Seek out material of interest to the organization. | ongoing |
| 2. Update the mailing list. | ongoing |
| 3. Send to MIND membership and constituency. | ongoing |

- | | |
|---|---------|
| C. Plan and implement a MIND membership drive. | |
| 1. Reevaluate membership benefits and investigate reciprocal membership benefits. | ongoing |
| 2. Update mailing list and send letter and brochure to potential members (individual, institutional, and business). | ongoing |

- | | |
|---|---------|
| D. Actively participate in professional conferences. | ongoing |
| 1. Encourage MIND members to present at professional conferences. | ongoing |
| 2. Sponsor activities at conferences. | ongoing |
| 3. Network with North Dakota Tourism participants. | ongoing |

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| E. Facilitate unified state-wide activities promoting museums. | done |
| 1. Develop a unified message for museums to use in public information packets, press releases, PSAs, etc. | action step |
| 2. Heighten the awareness of International Museum Day on May 18 and the value of museums year-round. | action step |

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| F. Promote authentic North Dakota culture and heritage. | ongoing |
| 1. Continue dialogue with Tourism Division and other entities about promoting North Dakota museums. | ongoing |
| 2. Initiate dialogue with regional tourism organizations to promote regional museums. | action step |

- | | |
|---|---------|
| III. Sponsor educational workshops and training state-wide. | ongoing |
| A. Participate in North Dakota History Day activities. | ongoing |

1. Promote the use of local culture/museums in student projects.
 2. Serve as judges.
 3. Provide a prize during regional competitions (and/or during state-wide competition).
 - B. Provide scholarships for members to participate in training and workshop experiences throughout the year.
 1. Annually provide scholarships for workshops, etc.
 2. Consider providing scholarships to member-determined training and workshop experiences.
 - C. Cross promote other state-wide cultural organization's workshops and training activities.
 1. Investigate opportunities available.
 2. Investigate collaborating on workshops with other state-wide cultural organizations.
 - D. Promote internship experiences for interested students.
- IV. Implement the business and activities of the organization.
- A. Conduct business as directed by the MIND bylaws and as recommended by MIND members and constituents.
 1. Maintain a yearly organizational plan and update the organization's short-range plan annually.
 2. Develop an annual budget.
 3. Nominate and elect new board members.
 4. Plan and host the MIND annual meeting.
 - B. Involve MIND members and constituents.
 - C. Document and preserve tangible evidence of the business, projects and activities of the organization.

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MiND members earn award

Two Museums in North Dakota member museums, the Chateau de Mores State Historic Site and the Billings County Museum, have received a national award from the American Association of Museums (AAM). The two museums joined with Dickinson State University and private businesses in Medora to develop the *Footsteps Into Medora's Past*.

Footsteps Into Medora's Past has won the AAM's 2007 EdCom Award for Excellence in Programming. The program earned a similar award in 2006 from the Mountain Plains Museum Association.

Footsteps in Medora's Past combined the efforts and resources of the State Historical Society of North Dakota,

Dickinson State University, the Billings County Historical Society, the Billings County Museum, the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation and other businesses within Medora. The program, initiated in 2002, has educated and entertained more than 8,000 visitors to Medora, according to a press release from the State Historical Society.

Program directors are Diane Rogness, Western Regional Manager for the SHSND, and Karen Nelson, adjunct instructor of communication at Dickinson State University. The *Footsteps Into Medora's Past* introduces visitors to the heritage of Medora through a free walking tour of the downtown area that features short vignettes presented by



Actors in the "Recollections of Murder and Mayhem in Medora" museum theater production are shown. They are Dick Taylor, Kathy Hollar, Don Ehli and Doug Ellison. The play is part of the *Footsteps Into Medora's Past* that was recognized nationally. This photo was taken at the 2006 MiND Annual Meeting.

James Odermann Photo

"Time Travelers" who are actors in period costume. Another part of the program is a children's tour of the Chateau de Mores State Historic Site.

The final part of the *Footsteps Into Medora's Past* is a professional theatre production entitled "Recollection of Murder and Mayhem in Medora." The theatre production is presented in the restored courtroom of Billings County Courthouse, which is now the Billings County Museum, and tells of the 1885 murder trial of the Marquis de Mores.

Footsteps Into Medora's Past was recognized in 2006 by the Mountain-Plains Museum Association. The MPMA is a regional association that provides services to museum professionals

in 10 states, including North Dakota. (The annual MPMA is meeting September 9-14 2007, in Fargo, ND.)

The collaborative effort will continue this season. The walking tours will present information about the history of the community and the people who settled the community. "Recollections of Murder and Mayhem in Medora" will be presented on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from June 8 through August 12, 2007.

Individuals wanting more information can contact the Chateau de Mores State Historic Site (701-623-4355) or the Medora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (701-623-4829) or email bcm@midstate.net.

Top 15 in three categories listed

(Dealing only with mill levies for historical societies)

Graph 1-2:

15 counties with highest mill levy, 2005

Adams	0.75
Eddy	0.59
Billings	0.49
Traill	0.48
Emmons	0.47
Williams	0.46
Sheridan	0.39
Steele	0.36
Hettinger	0.36
Towner	0.34
Logan	0.34
Pierce	0.33
McKenzie	0.32
Rolette	0.30
Divide	0.29

Graph 1-3:

15 counties with highest potential tax income, 2005

Grand Forks	\$36,981
Ward	\$21,887
Williams	\$17,487
Morton	\$14,574
Traill	\$12,371
Richland	\$12,276
Stutsman	\$12,214
Barnes	\$8,777
Walsh	\$7,815
Pembina	\$7,458
McLean	\$6,613
Emmons	\$6,416
Ramsey	\$6,372
Bottineau	\$6,124
McKenzie	\$5,329

Graph 1-4:

15 counties with highest taxable valuation, 2005

Cass	\$357,775,914
Burleigh	\$171,148,847
Grand Forks	\$147,923,914
Ward	\$115,193,059
Morton	\$58,294,903
Stutsman	\$50,889,665
Richland	\$49,104,933
Stark	\$40,254,067
Williams	\$38,014,404
Barnes	\$35,106,456
Walsh	\$31,260,549
Pembina	\$29,832,498
McLean	\$26,453,687
Traill	\$25,772,240
Bottineau	\$25,517,224

Graph 1-2: These are counties in North Dakota that have a mill levy that is higher than the minimum allowed by law, .25 mills. In order to increase the levy over .25 mills, a 60 per cent majority from voters in the county is necessary. The Museums in North Dakota Board of Directors is investigating opportunities to change this law.

Graph 1-3: This graphic represents the counties with the highest potential mill levy income that was on the 2005 tax statements for individual residents within the affected counties.

Graph 1-4: This graphic shows the 15 counties that have the highest taxable valuation of property within the state.

MiND

Museums in North Dakota

James A. Odermann, Editor

MUSEUMS IN NORTH DAKOTA

2767 129th Ave. SW

Belfield, ND 58622-9330

Have you lost your MiND? Check your label (renewal date printed in red) to see if your MiND membership is current! If the date is April 1, 2007 or previous, we encourage you to renew your membership. **If you have paid and there is an error, please notify Linda Olson, phone: (701) 858-3836, or email: linda.olson@minotstateu.edu**

MiND set to hold 2007 annual meeting in Fargo

I hope all MiND members will try to attend some or all of the Mountain-Plains Museum Association (MPMA) Conference in Fargo, ND September 10-14, 2007. The focus of the conference will be on trends and technology in the museum field.

There should be sessions with some training in technology that will benefit all museums. We don't have to travel out of state to attend this time. There will be fun sessions and lots of interesting and informative presentations of projects throughout this ten state area (Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming). I will look forward to seeing you in Fargo in September.

MiND still has scholarships available for attending conferences and workshops. Contact Leona Odermann at bcm@midstate.net or Felicia Sergeant at director@buffalomuseum.com for more information about the scholarships.

The MiND Annual Meeting will be held in Fargo during the MPMA Conference. Watch the newsletter for more details on the upcoming meeting.

MiND members are encouraged to send suggestions for long range plans for vision and goals for the organization. Included in this issue is a report from the committee dealing with planning. Your ideas and suggestions will be presented at the next board meeting when plans will be made. Send your suggestions to me at dpearson@ndsupernet.com.

I am wishing all of you a very eventful and interesting year. ■



DOROTHY PEARSON
MiND President

An Apology

I ran out of room. The mill levy and planning reports, which are important for the future success of MiND, took more room than expected. I hope to continue to provide more information in the future on these important stories as we work to create positive situations for our small museums.

The spotlight on the Towner County Historical Museum in Cando and reports on AASLH and MPMA will come later.

The MPMA meeting is in North Dakota (see president's column). Scholarships are available from the State Historical Society for this event. More in next issue.

James A. Odermann

Editor

odermann@goesp.com

701-575-4767 ■



Bonanzaville

CASS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 11, 2009

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB 2173 and ask that this committee recommend its passage to the full house.

As we all wrestle with the current economic downturn, it may seem to be bad timing to talk about increasing taxes. However, SB 2173 is not a tax increase, it is the chance for a local museum or historical society to approach the local community and ask for additional support. By allowing for a simple majority, SB 2173 levels the playing field for those museums and historical societies that might choose to go before the voters in their local community.

As I believe Representative Koppelman is aware, the Cass County Commission currently provides funding from its general revenues to support the operation of the Cass County Historical Society and Bonanzaville. This year (2009) that support is \$60,000. However, Cass County tends to be the exception in this regard. Additionally, we here at Bonanzaville and the Cass County Historical Society are working on some large expansion and improvement plans, plans I have had the pleasure of sharing directly with Representative Koppelman, that include a long term goal of moving away from regular public funding for our operation. Given the large population centers in the greater Fargo/West Fargo/Moorhead area, this goal should be reasonably attainable in the coming years. For many of the smaller museums in less populous parts of the state, public financing may be the most realistic route. Again, please let me emphasize that SB 2173 is about giving the opportunity to make the case to the local community about how that community might want to support their local museum or historical society.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Whitmarsh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce Whitmarsh
Executive Director
Cass County Historical Society/Bonanzaville

Missouri Valley

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 11, 2009

Senate Bill No 2173

SB 2173 does not automatically raise taxes, it provides a means for counties to provide funds for their community projects.

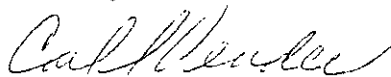
SB 2173 would allow counties with smaller tax bases to increase their historical and museum funding with a majority vote.

The State Historical Society has matching funds available for a number of projects. This bill would allow local entities to qualify for more funding from state and federal programs.

Museums and historical societies need increased sources of revenue to properly inventory, care for, and display their documents and artifacts. Many of these items will quickly deteriorate if not properly stored and preserved. This needs to be done at the local level for the benefit of the local public and tourists.

As a fifteen year Board of Directors member of the Missouri Valley Historical Society (Buckstop Junction), I encourage you to support Senate Bill 2173 for the benefit of local communities and their historical organizations and museums.

Sincerely,



Carl S. Vender
Immediate Past President



Bowman County Historical and Genealogical Society
Pioneer Trails Regional Museum
12 First Avenue NE P.O. Box 78
Bowman, North Dakota 58623

March 10, 2009

Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee

RE: Senate Bill 2173

Committee Members;

I am writing in support of the bill #SB2173 re: museums in North Dakota. As a Board Member and volunteer at Pioneer Trails Regional Museum in Bowman for the past 10 years, I see the positive impact a good regional museum has on people's lives, especially children.

Now, more than ever, families depend on these institutions not only for inexpensive entertainment, but for the learning experience, enjoyment, and comfort that the arts and history can provide.

We need to make it possible for our community to continue to support this very valuable resource.

Thank you for your efforts.

Colleen Conniff Kelley
101 2nd Ave SW
Bowman, ND 58623
701-523-4512

Testimony to House Political Subdivisions Committee

March 12, 2009 – Prairie Room

To: Members, House Political Subdivisions Committee

RE: Senate Bill 2173

My name is Nyle Burchill. I reside in Valley City, which is in Barnes County. I was on the board of the Barnes County Historical Society for six years ending in July of '08.

We were operating on 1/4 mill. This of course was not enough. We have a salaried curator who was under paid. He is a young single man who lives with his parents. He does a very good job. All other people involved do so voluntarily. We attempted to pass the extra 1/2 mill by vote. This is the maximum allowed by current law.

We made several attempts with no success. We could get 52-53% yes vote every time but of course we needed 60%. In June of '08 we decided to try again. This was to be the last attempt. We spent a lot of money (which we didn't have) on advertising and some of the board members went out to the area towns and promoted it at the coffee shops.

We also partnered with two regional museums in the county to share with them. To our amazement it did pass with over 60% yes vote. We are currently operating on 3/4 mill, sharing with the two other museums. Our curator is helping them with their programs.

We still do not receive enough to cover expenses. We are dependent on donations to make up the difference and they don't always come through. I am sure that western counties are having even more problems keeping their Historical Societies afloat.

If SB 2173 becomes law it does not legislate a tax, it's still up to the counties to decide that. I urge you to give this bill a do pass recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nyle K. Burchill
835 8th Ave NW
Valley City, ND 58072
701-845-4283
Cell 701-840-2108

Bowman County Historical and Genealogical Society
Pioneer Trails Regional Museum
12 First Avenue NE P.O. Box 78
Bowman, North Dakota 58623

March 10, 2009

Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee

RE: Senate Bill 2173

Committee Members:

My wife and I are volunteers at the Pioneer Trails Regional Museum, in Bowman, ND. We mainly work in the Paleontology department. Kathy is also the secretary for the Pioneer Trails Regional Museum and takes care of the North Dakota Humanities Speakers. We also both serve as board members for the PTRM.

Senate Bill 2173 is needed. We both feel strongly for the implementation of this in the drafted form. The portion of allowing a simple majority for passage of the local tax and allowing the local tax to be raised to a maximum of five (5) mills will help us considerably.

We believe that this bill would allow all the museums find financial support on a local basis. At present, the key to collecting the heritage of the State of North Dakota is largely done on a volunteer basis.

We urge your support of SB 2173.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

Donald and Kathy Wilkening
1002 2nd Street NW
Bowman ND 58623
701-523-4463

Senate Bill 2173

Thursday, March 12, 2009, 10:30, Prairie Room

Claudia J. Berg
Museum Director and Expansion Coordinator
State Historical Society of North Dakota
cberg@nd.gov
328-2666

Chairman Wrangham and Committee Members,

The State Historical Society works closely with the 140+ county, local and tribal museums across the state, providing technical assistance, educational resources and partnership opportunities. As the state's history agency we rely on these local institutions to collect, protect and present their county's history. Where better to tell the stories of a community than in their local museum.

SB 2173 is an opportunity for county organizations to improve the operations of their museum. Increasing the mill levy to five mills could detonate a funding source critical to some of the museums in the least populated counties in the state. One mill in Bowman County will not buy what one mill in Cass County can provide.

Heritage tourism is a growing industry in North Dakota. These county and local museums are what visitors want to see as they explore the countryside. The museum is often the hub of a community's identity and heritage but it needs support to maintain the building and keep the doors open. Financial resources are limited and this bill could assist some in those endeavors. This bill continues to allow county commissioners, and the majority of voting citizens of each county, to determine their own path. The proposed changes in this bill allow those who chose to move forward the ability to do good things for their communities.



March 9, 2009

Re: MPMA Sees SB 2173 as an Economic Driver

To: Members of the Government & Veterans Affairs Committee

On behalf of the Mountain-Plains Museums Association (MPMA) which is a service provider to your constituents, I write in support of SB 2173. MPMA supports this bill because its North Dakota constituents support it and because it would create a positive economic impact to the communities throughout the state where there are local historical societies.

We are well aware that you all are in support of this bill, and we applaud you for doing so. We hope you will continue your support for, as you no doubt already know, these organizations are woefully under capitalized and are just barely hanging on. Yet, they do an important job: preserving the state's memory and history. No one else does this. Moreover, it is getting harder for local historical societies to take proper care of their collection and to welcome the tourists who want to stop in and learn more about the history of North Dakota as conveyed by these museums. Tourism dollars could be an untapped source of revenue for these towns if museums had enough money to entice and accommodate tourists by having longer operating hours, enough staff to keep the doors open and interesting exhibits.

Our members in North Dakota and elsewhere throughout MPMA's 10-state region have noticed that the North Dakota tourism industry is growing and is now an important "industry" in the state. This may be why support is now growing for local historical societies to ensure that they are no longer the missing link in the state's tourism industry. It also looks like state leadership is now viewing these organizations as the economic drivers that they can be for their community and can see that if these small museums are funded properly, can produce an economic benefit that would help strengthen tourism locally and statewide.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for your support of local museums.

Sincerely yours,

Rick Young, MPMA President

7110 West David Drive, Littleton, CO 80128-5404 303-979-9358 fax 303-979-3553
EMAIL: director@mpma.net or info@mpma.net