OLD PRISON MUSEUMS

Educators Kit

Tour Information

Old Montana Prison 1871-1979

The Old Montana Prison was first established as a Territorial Prison in 1871. After Montana was granted Statehood on November 8th 1889, the site operated as a State Prison until 1979.

Soon after its closure, corrections professionals recognized the historical importance of the location, and in order to protect the site it was listed on the National Register of Historical Places. Soon after, the Montana Legislature proposed reopening the site as a maximum-security prison. This proposal was beaten, thus keeping the site for its historical value.

The Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation is dedicated to carrying on this legacy and to help educate the public about the history of the Old Montana Prison. This educator's kit has been developed to further this goal. The information is designed as an aid to help educators around the State teach their students about the history of the Old Prison and its importance in the history of the State of Montana.

Admissions Fees

The educational discount admission fee is $9 per child. Two adult chaperones are allowed with each tour plus the bus driver. Any adult after is at a discounted rate of $14.50. Payment for the group can be made upon arrival; checks can be made out to the Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation or PCMAF. This discounted price is valid for all members in your group, bus driver, teacher, chaperone and students. For information about discounted rates for special groups please contact the Old Prison Museums on (406) 846-3111

Hours of Operation

The Old Prison Museum and the Montana Auto Museum are open 7 days a week throughout the year. Yesterdays Playthings and Frontier Montana are only open during the summer months. All museums are closed on December 25th and January 1st.

Summer operating hours are 9:00 am to 6:00 pm from May 15 to October 15. (Dates are approximate, please check in advance if you plan on visiting us in May or October)

Winter operating hours are from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. During winter operation only the Old Prison Museum and the Montana Auto Museum are open.

Please do not schedule tours to begin later than 2 hours before we close our doors.

Educators Kit Tour Information

Chaperones

One adult chaperone is required for every ten students. The staff and volunteers at the museum are not responsible for supervising students in your group. Bus drivers can serve as chaperones. All students must remain with chaperones throughout the duration of the visit.

Group Size

Please keep the size of your group to 40 students or less. If your group is larger, please contact us in advance so arrangements can be made to safely accommodate everyone.

Dress code

Parts of the tour are outside and some of the walkways are uneven and can become slippery when wet. During the winter months many areas of the museum get extremely cold as none of the buildings within the Old Prison are heated. Please instruct your students to dress appropriately for the weather and to wear comfortable shoes.

Special Needs

Please contact us about special needs if anyone in your group is handicapped. Wheelchairs and motorized carts are available and most areas in the Old Prison Museum are handicap accessible. The chapel, shower, hole, and office areas in the Administration Building are not accessible to wheelchairs.

Facilities

The Visitors Center in the Old Prison Museum offers restrooms, vending machines and a gift shop. Within the Old Prison buildings there are no restrooms. Across the street there is a picnic area that is very pleasant during the warmer months. We also have a small ice cream & snack shop that can be visited during Summer operation.

How to Schedule Your Visit

Call: (406) 846-3111

Fax: (406) 846-3156

Email: Curator@pcmaf.org

Write: Old Prison Museums, 1106 Main Street, Deer Lodge, MT 59722

Please make reservations for your visit at least one week in advance. The tour guides are volunteers and time is required to prepare for your group. We do have a reservation form available that we ask you to fill out prior to your visit.

Educators Kit Tour Information

A Typical Visit

Arrival and Bus Unloading	15 minutes
Visitors Area viewing	20 minutes
Museum Viewing	1 hour and 45 minutes
Restroom and Bus Loading	15 minutes
Total Time	2 hours 35 minutes

(Note: The total length of your visit will depend upon the size of your group and interaction with the museum staff.)

The Day Of Your Visit

Arrival Time: Please be ready to begin your Museum Tour at the scheduled time. In the event your group is delayed, please contact us at (406) 846-3111 and advise us of the situation. We can then inform your volunteer guide. Plan that your visit will last between 2 to 3 hours.

Location: The Old Prison Museums are located at 1106 Main Street, Deer Lodge, Montana 59722. Deer Lodge is located on I-90 and you can exit the interstate from either north or south of town.

If you are traveling eastbound on I-90 towards Butte, take exit 184. After leaving the interstate, follow Main Street for 1.9 miles. The Old Prison will be on the right side of the street.

If you are traveling westbound on I-90 towards Missoula, take exit 187. After leaving the interstate follow Main Street for 1.2 miles. The Old Prison will be on the left side of the street.

There is a large parking lot to the south of the Visitors Center. There is also parallel parking on both sides of Main Street.

Maps: In the educational kit and on our website you will find maps to help you locate the Old Prison Museums. One map shows Deer Lodge located near I-90. The Old Prison is highlighted on the map along with Main St. The second map shows the streets near the Old Prison and the location of the parking lot. The maps are available on the website for download as PDF files. Please go to www.pcmaf.org and click on the Educators Kit.

Unloading: We recommend an adult from your group come to the visitor center while your group is unloading. At this time the museum staff can collect the admission fee for the visit. Please ask your students to remain together as a group. There are restrooms at the back of the Visitors Center and Gift Shop.

Educators Kit Tour Information

Lesson Plans

The Old Montana Prison Museums have created worksheets relating to the history of the Old Prison. These lessons are yours to use free of charge. In the future we hope to expand the kit with more worksheets and educational information about the Old Prison. These worksheets are available as PDF files that can be downloaded from our website and used before, during or after your visit.

Students will be able to discover many of the answers to the worksheets from the guided tour and the self guided tour booklet. We have the booklet available on the PDF website to download at www.pcmaf.org

Our lesson plans were inspired and adapted from the Old Idaho Penitentiary State Historic Site Educational Resource Kit. You can visit their website at www.idahohistory.net/oldpen.html

Maps/Guides

We have maps, Tour and Visitor Guides available from our website for use during your visit. Please go to www.pcmaf.org to view or download.

Bibliography

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Shirley, Steve. "Women in Prison." *Great Falls Tribune. Sept. 11, 1989*