



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **AMERICAN PRAIRIE RESERVE ACQUIRES HISTORIC LEWISTOWN BUILDING**

*Nonprofit plans to create National Discovery Center as gateway to prairie*

LEWISTOWN, MT – American Prairie Reserve is excited to announce it has chosen the historic Power Mercantile Building in downtown Lewistown as the future home of the Reserve’s National Discovery Center.

The National Discovery Center will eventually serve as a jumping off point for visitors traveling to experience trails, wildlife, camping, and other recreational opportunities on the Reserve and nearby public lands. It will also offer entertaining and educational exhibits, programming and events for all Montanans to enjoy.

According to Alison Fox, CEO of American Prairie Reserve, the nonprofit spent more than 18 months seeking input from community members, city leaders and other local stakeholders, and conducted a comprehensive survey of potential sites before selecting the Power Mercantile, also known as the Reid’s building. The conservation organization took ownership of the building on September 12, 2018.

“We are thrilled to be growing our investment in the Lewistown community,” said Fox. “The Power Mercantile building has an incredibly rich history and we’re excited to be able to contribute to the revitalization happening in the downtown area.”

Fox says Lewistown was a natural choice for the location of the National Discovery center for many reasons, including its proximity to the Reserve and amenities like hotels, restaurants and a regional airport. A [recent study](#) by the University of Montana concluded there is significant but untapped potential for increased visitation to Missouri River Country. The Reserve hopes the National Discovery Center, combined with ongoing efforts to construct an outdoor infrastructure in the region will encourage increased visitation.

Earlier this summer, the Reserve also announced their [new Hut-to-Hut trail system](#), which will eventually link several affordable huts across a 200-mile prairie trail system intended to create more recreational opportunity. The first two huts have already been completed and can be reserved online by members of the public.

“We have received an outpouring of support from local community members and look forward to creating an inviting, educational space that we believe will provide a lasting public benefit,” said Fox.

The 13,000 square foot property, was originally built in 1901 by T.C. Power, who also owned the PN Ranch, which American Prairie Reserve purchased in 2016.

The nonprofit will be engaging in a multi-year fundraising campaign while it continues to fine tune interior design plans. Fox says the National Discovery Center will eventually serve as a gathering place where visitors can learn about the natural wonders of the prairie ecosystem, the human and biological history of the Upper Missouri River Breaks region of Montana and opportunities for public access and outdoor recreation on the Reserve. In addition, the Power Mercantile building will provide the organization with more space for a growing staff presence in Lewistown.

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### **About American Prairie Reserve**

American Prairie Reserve’s mission is to create the largest nature reserve in the continental United States, a spectacular refuge for people and wildlife preserved forever as part of America’s heritage. When complete, the Reserve will be larger than Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks combined and will support all the animals that historically called the Great Plains home, including buffalo, wolves, bears, elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, swift fox, upland birds including the greater sage grouse, birds of prey, and all manner of snakes, amphibians, and insects. Already open to the public for recreation including camping, hunting, fishing, and birding, the Reserve offers visitors a once-in-a-lifetime, horizon-expanding opportunity to reconnect with nature on a truly grand scale. Learn more at [americanprairie.org](http://americanprairie.org)