

Long-range building panel formidable in Legislature

FRANK ADAMS

Tribune Capitol Bureau

HELENA — The Long-Range Building Committee proved once again to be one of the most powerful committees of the Montana Legislature, if not the most powerful, with its recommendations emerging from the session virtually unscathed.

The state's new long-range building program comprises 90 projects ranging from parks to prisons and totaling some \$80 million.

Of that vast array of projects and amount of money, only three small items are different from the committee's recommendations. They are \$300,000 instead of \$41,000 for game

News analysis

range acquisition; \$50,000 for the Moss Mansion in Billings, and \$20,000 toward restoration of Fort Owen at Stevensville.

Only a few items even generated controversy. One was part of the game range acquisition amount, which was in and out a couple of times. The committee lost on that one in the sense that it ended up differently than the committee had recommended.

The other controversies were hard but unsuccessful runs taken at the committee's recommendations for expanding the present prison rather than renovating the old one, a new building for the Department of Natural Resources and a park at Whitefish Lake.

matter of statesman-like concern for the better good of all Montana.

Manuel insists there is "not too much trading" by committee members in arriving at their finished pig. Generally it's just a matter of being satisfied with the administration's priorities and other proposals put to them, he claims.

Besides Manuel and Thomas, committee members are Reps. Francis Bardanoue, D-Harlem; Gene Donaldson, R-Helena; Bob Thoft, R-Stevensville, and Steve Waldron, D-Missoula; and Sens. Jack Haffey, D-Butte; Matt Himsl, R-Kalispell, and Mark Etchart, R-Glasgow.

Except for Thoft and Waldron, all have been on the committee in previous sessions.

Some observers question whether the bargaining expertise and relationships developed by keeping the same members session after session tends to make it a closed corporation.

But Manuel says he doesn't agree that members should be limited to one term on the committee.

"I know it was said last time," he said. "But there are no real deals made — they just try to spread them around in the fairest way."

In keeping with its power and prestige, it's known as a committee, although technically it's just a subcommittee.

Mild-mannered Chairman Rex Manuel, D-Fairfield, acknowledges that holding the committee's recommendations together was quite a thing, especially in light of the prison fight.

"It's a real good committee," Manuel says. He also admits there is a bit of "strategy" involved in that there is "a little bit for every part of the state."

The projects that are run through the Long-Range Building Committee are commonly known as pork from the pork barrel, a phrase that is probably derived from the pre-Civil War practice of distributing salt pork to the slaves from huge barrels.

Manuel's reference to something for everyone is sometimes also stated in piggy terms. The commit-

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Like the budget subcommittees, its recommendations go first to the House Appropriations Committee, and after they get through the House they are processed by the Senate Finance and Claims Committee.

Possibly because the proposals were already heard in the Long-Range Building Committee, and because it doesn't get going until mid-session, the proposals tend to be processed rather perfunctorily in the two appropriations committees.

Projects to be built with bonds financed with increased cigarette taxes total \$36.3 million. They are:

Prison expansion, \$14.4 million; complete Cisel Hall remodeling and addition at Eastern Montana College, \$625,000; natural resources building, \$7 million; engineering lab and classroom building at Montana Tech, \$4.3 million; expand the greenhouse at Montana State University, \$5.3 million; buy riverfront land at the University of Montana, \$500,000; addition to the Historical Society building, \$2.1 million; renovate the UJA social science building, \$500,000; airport improvements, statewide, \$1.3 million (with \$13 million to be added by the federal government); remodel Cowan Hall, Northern Montana College, \$175,000; build an office-lab for the Western Triangle Agricultural Research Center, \$121,000; purchase the historic Moss Mansion, Billings, \$50,000.

Projects to built with bonds to be financed with fish and game fees are:

A new fish hatchery at Creston Springs, \$455,000; renovate the Great Falls fish hatchery, \$1.9 million; renovate the Big Timber fish hatchery, \$500,000; a new regional fish and game headquarters at Glasgow, \$220,000.

Major items in the cash portion of the building program include:

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MINUTES OF THE LONG RANGE BUILDING COMMITTEE
February 1, 1983

Side 1 The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. in Room 108 of the Capitol Building.

Members present were Sen. Matt Himsl, Sen. Mark Etchart, Sen. Bill Thomas, Sen. Donald Ochsner, Sen. Jack Haffey, Rep. Rex Manuel, Rep. Gene Donaldson, Rep. Bob Thoft, and Rep. Steve Waldron. Rep. Francis Bardanoue was absent.

Also present were Morris Brusett, director of the Department of Administration, Phil Hauck, administrator of the Architecture and Engineering Division of the Department of Administration, Tom O'Connell of the Architecture and Engineering Division, Don Gruel, administrator of the Maintenance Division of the Department of Highways, Mike Ferguson, administrator of the Aeronautics Division of the Department of Commerce, and Dave Kneedler of the Aeronautics Division.

(009) Chairman Manuel welcomed the members and introduced the members that are new to the committee. Sen. Etchart is the Vice Chairman for the committee. The Legislative Fiscal Analyst for the committee is Curt Nichols and the secretary for this meeting was Lynn Tumey.

(036) Phil Hauck reviewed the Capitol Construction Program book for the 1983-85 biennium. All projects are numbered by priority. Priority numbers 1 through 49 are in the cash program, which is money that is available for expenditure. Priority numbers 50 through 67 are projects that are recommended to be funded by bonded debt. Mr. Hauck then introduced Tom O'Connell who is an architect for the Architecture and Engineering Division and was very instrumental in putting together the Capitol Construction Program.

(147) Morris Brusett distributed to the committee members a breakdown of the cash program (see Attachment 1). There was an error in the Capitol Construction Program book in stating the funds available for the cash program. The book stated \$6,147,212 funds available but there actually was \$7,332,494. Mr. Brusett then explained the bonded debt program. These funds come out of the General Fund. There is a bill to raise the taxes to cover this program: 3¢ on the cigarette taxes and 2.65% increase on the retail liquor excise tax. These two increases, if passed, will generate enough money to fund this bonded debt program, about \$3.8 million.

Priority #23 (230)

Don Gruel explained to the committee that the Department of Highways owns 560 buildings with a value of \$31,782,500. The Department is requesting \$750,000 for upkeep, modifications, painting and security fences. There is also a small parcel of land included in the request for an additional structure at Neihart.

Priority #26 (257)

This priority has been revised by the Architecture and Engineering Division. It is a request for modifications to an existing maintenance garage on Lost Trail Pass. The request for this project is \$63,500.

Priority #28 (270)

This request is for the construction of a sandhouse 20 miles east of Miles City. The Department feels this is an ideal location for the sandhouse between Miles City and Glendive. The request for this project is \$44,275.

(285) The Chairman opened the floor to questions from the committee. Rep. Donaldson asked where the Department gets the funding for these requests. Mr. Gruel responded that the funds are earmarked revenue from the Highway Department. There was some discussion regarding the maintenance garage on Lost Trail Pass.

Priority #21 (343)

Mike Ferguson told the committee that the request for the West Yellowstone hangar project has been withdrawn due to lack of earmarked revenue funds.

Priority #24 (366)

This project is for runway improvements for the Lincoln Airport. The airport is in poor condition and is deteriorating rapidly.

Mr. Ferguson explained that Congress recently enacted the new Airport Aide Program. There is a 90% federal funding with a 10% sponsor match.

There was a good deal of discussion regarding a bonding mechanism to generate funds for the 10% match. Currently the 10% match would come out of earmarked revenue but if

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the bonding mechanism is approved, the 10% match would not have to come from state funds.

The airport at Lincoln is state owned so the 10% match would have to come out of earmarked revenues.

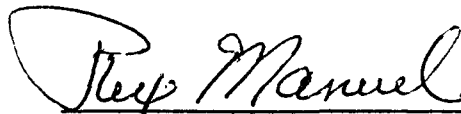
(691) The Chairman discussed the agenda for the week.

Side 2

The hearing on the Coal Tax Park Acquisitions was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rex Manuel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Rex Manuel, Chairman
Approved

RM/lt

CASH PROGRAM

One method of funding Long-Range Building Program (LRBP) capital projects is through the Cash Program. Each biennium the legislature appropriates an amount from the Cash Program for building projects. The Cash Program receives revenue from the cigarette tax, A&E supervisory fees, and interest earnings. The revenue received is invested until needed. Interest earnings are deposited into the Cash Program to be appropriated by the legislature.

LRBP Cash Program Funds Available

1984 & 1985 Biennium	
Beginning Fund Balance ¹	\$ 827,729
Estimated Revenue:	
A&E Supervisory Fees ²	\$ 120,000
Cigarette Tax ³	5,880,000
Interest Earnings ⁴	<u>1,500,000</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 7,500,000
A&E Operational Budget	<u>(995,235)</u>
Total Available for Appropriation	<u><u>\$ 7,332,494</u></u>

¹This is the unused balance we anticipate being carried over to the 1984-85 biennium.

²18-2-105, MCA, allows the department to assess a supervisory charge on LRBP projects funded by sources other than the cigarette tax. The amount charged is 1%.

³16-11-119, MCA, requires that 27% of the cigarette tax collected is to be deposited into the LRBP cash program. We believe this will amount to \$245,000 a month. This figure is based on current prices.

⁴The interest earnings projection is based on anticipated interest rates and the rate of cash draw down in the account.