

USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands and Tesoro Corporation of Mandan **Partners of the Passport to North Dakota History Project**



Governor Dalrymple congratulates Passport to History partners.

The *Passport to North Dakota History* project is one of the most significant partnerships that the Society and the Foundation have developed. The award-winning passport is one of the most sought-after tourism guides for our state. Pocket-sized, easy to read, and chock-full of interesting history, it is estimated that more than \$300,000 in funding and in-kind support has been generated by the passport and collaborating projects. It all began as an activity to help celebrate the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in 2003-2006 and has continued on to 2014. The passport project has been expanded to include dozens of partners and has attracted attention of campers, visitors, life-long learners, and school children.

The initial concept for the passport came from a planning meeting called by Tom Turck, retired Grasslands Archaeologist, USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands. Tom and his team, along with the Historical Society and its Foundation, ND Department of Commerce-Tourism Division, ND State Parks and Recreation Department, KLJ, and others envisioned a guide to many historic attractions in the state. Today the *Passport to North Dakota History* includes about 40 interpretive sites, tours, trails, campgrounds, historic sites, parks,

byways, backways and more. The short sketch of each site and a small photo give visitors enough information to help them plan their visit and also provides contacts for additional information.



North Dakota Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman finds the Passport a welcome guide for visitors.

“As the former Grasslands Archaeologist for the US Forest Service, I wanted to make the public more aware of the historic tourism and recreation opportunities to enjoy on the Dakota Prairie Grasslands. I approached the North Dakota State Historical Society as a possible partner and received an enthusiastic response. We successfully collaborated on several projects including the Passport to North Dakota History. The passport lists and describes both Forest Service and state heritage tourism and federal recreation possibilities throughout North Dakota. Public knowledge, recreation and heritage tourism has greatly increased because of the wide circulation of the passport. In 2008, we won the National and Regional Windows on the Past awards, the Forest Service’s highest awards for heritage. This mutually beneficial partnership continues today.”

*— Tom Turck, retired Grasslands Archaeologist,
USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands*

Tesoro of Mandan liked the passport project and expanded distribution of the passport to their ninety-three North Dakota Tesoro fueling stations, as well as providing funding for the distribution of free passports at every site listed in the passport. John Berger, former Mandan Refinery Manager, and Leif Peterson, retired Human Resources Manager, were enthusiastic supporters of the passport and hosted three major press conferences



Standing behind the new touch table for the Hub of History – Tom Turck, retired Grassland Archaeologist, Babete Anderson, Public Affairs Officer, and Liv Fetterman, Grasslands Archaeologist, USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands. Funds for this table were from USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands.

coordinated by the Tesoro San Antonio marketing staff to help promote the project.

During the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, Dan's SuperMarkets of North Dakota became interested in the project and printed three million plastic grocery bags to promote the website for the passport. Cass Clay Creamery of Fargo was encouraged to support the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial efforts and with the Historical Society developed the Lewis and Clark "Fun Facts," which were printed on 120 million milk cartons and distributed in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. Another offshoot of the passport was the distribution of 850 "Journey to Discovery Backpacks," offering information on historic sites, parks, and attractions across the state. KLJ has been the creative graphics partner for the printing and reprinting of the passport. In 2010, the North Dakota Department of Transportation, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, and more than twenty energy companies added the fold out map of the state which notes the passport sites as well as energy sites that folks can tour.

The late Jim Selby, a former Basin Electric employee, and his wife Jeanne were so impressed with the passport they set out to visit every single site in the guide and created a photo journal of their trips which they have shared with campers clubs in the state.

Passports have also been distributed by the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau, North Dakota Heritage Center Museum Store, North Dakota Geological Survey, The Bismarck Tribune and many members of the North Dakota Grocers Association – Economart of Williston,



The Selbys with fellow campers.

Hornbacher's Foods of Fargo-Moorhead, Leever's Foods of Devils Lake and their regional stores, and Miracle Mart of Minot. Hundreds of generous individuals have supported the marketing of the historic sites in our state and have helped build awareness of these treasures across the state.

In addition to funds for the passport printing and development, USDA Forest Service has funded a touchscreen table that will be used in the Hub of History at the expanded North Dakota Heritage Center. The concept of the passport has also influenced the Hub of History and Visitor Center in the State Museum. It has always been the desire of the Society to promote the historic sites in the state as showcased in the passport. The Hub of History, with the touchscreen table, will offer those services. The touchscreen table will augment visitor services and exhibits.

The most current edition of the *Passport to North Dakota History* features the newly expanded North Dakota Heritage Center grand opening and the 125th anniversary of statehood celebration to be held November 2, 2014. This edition was funded by USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands.



Virginia, SHSND Foundation, and Daryl Hill, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, highlight features of the Passport. Representatives of the Passport partners, along with Governor Dalrymple, recognize Tesoro's gift.

“The USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands, and I are very happy to be working with the State Historical Society of North Dakota and its Foundation on many projects. We are looking forward to completing and creating new opportunities for collaboration, where we can share information about heritage stewardship and the Grasslands. We look forward to continuing our partnership in the future.”

— Liv Fetterman, Grasslands Archaeologist, USDA Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands