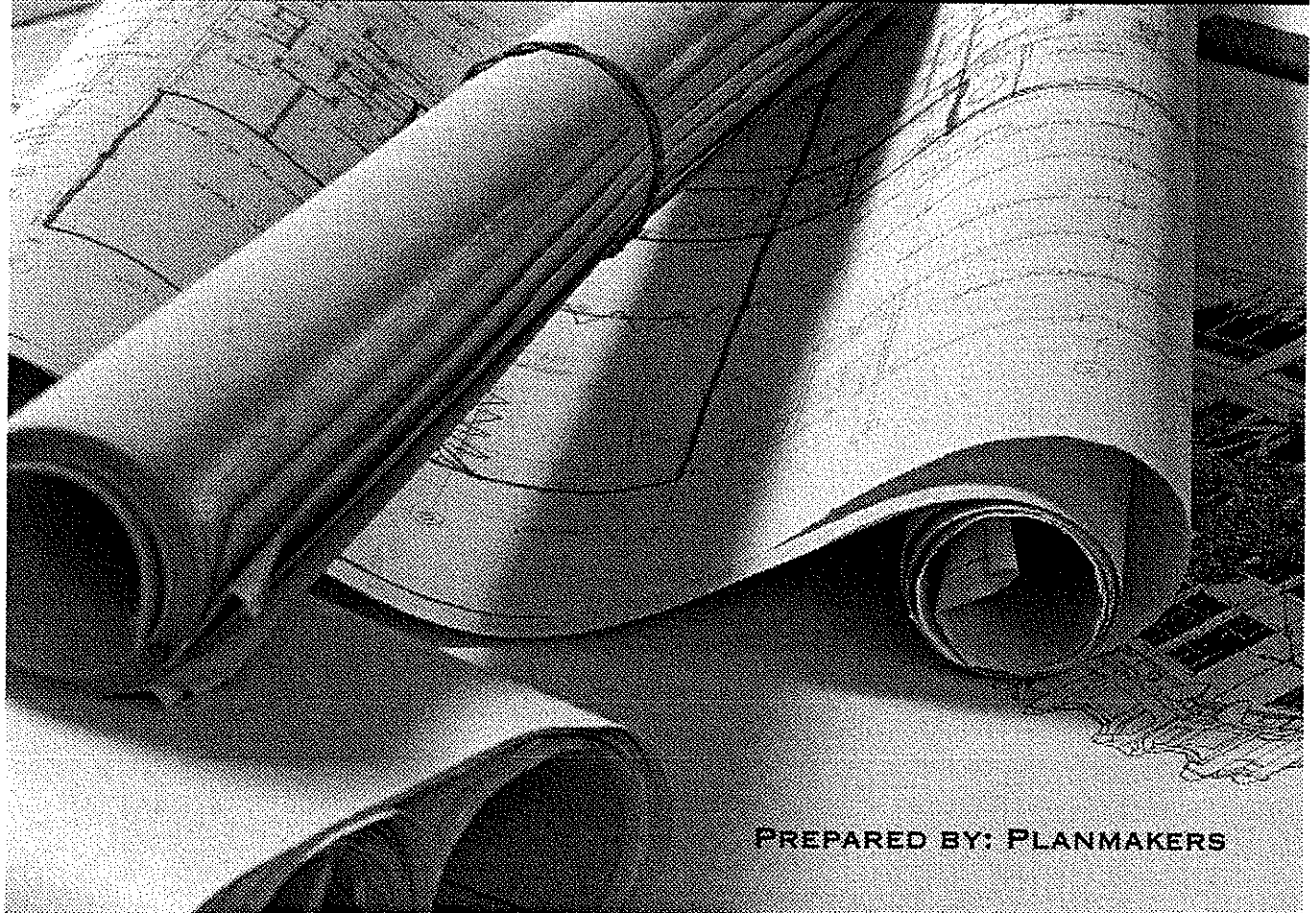


MOUNTAIN HOME DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN 2000

PREPARED FOR:
DIG-IT
CITY OF MOUNTAIN HOME
MOUNTAIN HOME CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



PREPARED BY: PLANMAKERS

MOUNTAIN HOME DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN 2000

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JANUARY 2000

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INTRODUCTION

The Mountain Home Downtown Revitalization Plan 2000 presents a multi-faceted program for rejuvenating downtown Mountain Home. The plan identifies a program of physical improvements, organizational efforts and potential funding sources. The vision of the plan will re-establish downtown as the primary, most enjoyable retail center serving all Mountain Home area residents. The plan is a refinement of the Downtown Revitalization Plan prepared in 1981.

Developed in collaboration with the DIG-IT Committee and community public reactions and suggestions, the plan was shaped by a city center questionnaire, open house and monthly meetings.

The plan serves as a long-range working document for guiding development, preparing policies, determining design details and setting priorities. Decisions relative to the downtown can be assured continuity as the plan serves to encourage and guide the area's development to the mutual benefit of the City, property owners, and the individuals who will use it.

STUDY AREA

The primary focus is Mountain Home's central business district. The study area encompasses the equivalent of some 40 blocks. Development density is low. Almost all buildings are one story high with a few upper floors in existence are either vacant or used for storage. Commercial use covers a majority of the property; downtown is spread over some twenty blocks. Commercial activity has shifted away from railroad-oriented Main Street toward the north and east, with the largest concentration on 2nd East Street. Financial and religious buildings are spread along 2nd, 3rd and 4th streets, while public institutions are located near the Elmore County Courthouse. Industrial use is primarily related to the railroad corridor and is buffered through the downtown by Railroad Park. Land on the fringe of the study area is primarily residential.



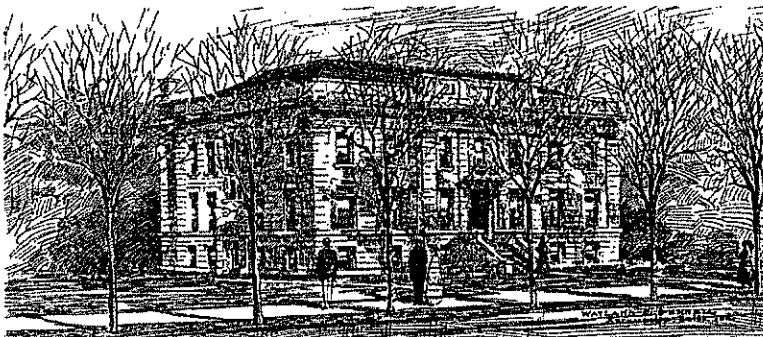
Main Street with Railroad Park on right – part of the Interstate 84 Business Loop (J. Bertram)

DOWNTOWN CONCERNS

Downtown Mountain Home is under pressure on a number of fronts, making planning and action necessary to strengthen the center of the city. The 45-mile distance to Boise with its numerous retail outlets contributes to significant retail leakage. Mountain Home lives in the shadow of well-developed news and advertising media promoting Boise retail and service outlets, a challenge for local businesses and media competing for consumer dollars. Creating more competition for Mountain Home retailers are low price goods available from the Air Base BX and Commissary available to military dependents and retirees. In addition, commercial competition is growing on major arterials serving the downtown. The activity of Interstate-84 has led to new development along American Legion Boulevard, spreading further from the heart of downtown and limiting walking relationships among outlets. Likewise, new commercial development on Air Base Road draws business away from downtown. Such commercial expansion weakens downtown and reduces its efficiency.

MOUNTAIN HOME POTENTIALS

Mountain Home possesses quiet, small-town living with a friendly atmosphere, the advantages of nearby Boise City, and convenient access to Idaho's recreational areas. The "land of sunshine," as it has been called because of its high prairie elevation of 3,139 feet, has a pleasant climate with a high number of sunny days.



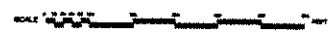
The Elmore County Courthouse, a cornerstone of the City-County Center.

Downtown Mountain Home has a considerable number of advantages to emphasize, such as the historical background and architectural heritage that continues to grace the area. Numerous stone and brick buildings such as the Elmore County Courthouse, Mellen Hotel, Bengoechea Hotel and Basque Pelota Court provide a historic heritage from which to expand. The business district also

consists of a wide mixture of architecture, including the Spanish Mission style and contemporary one-story buildings. Attractive landscaping has complemented a number of new downtown buildings. Downtown is plotted on a grid system, thus affording adequate access with wide streets and alleys.

Carl Miller and Railroad parks, along with the Mountain Home Middle School field, provide open green space for the downtown. The Railroad Park creates an attractive buffer to the railroad tracks and a convenient location for special events.

MOUNTAIN HOME IDAHO



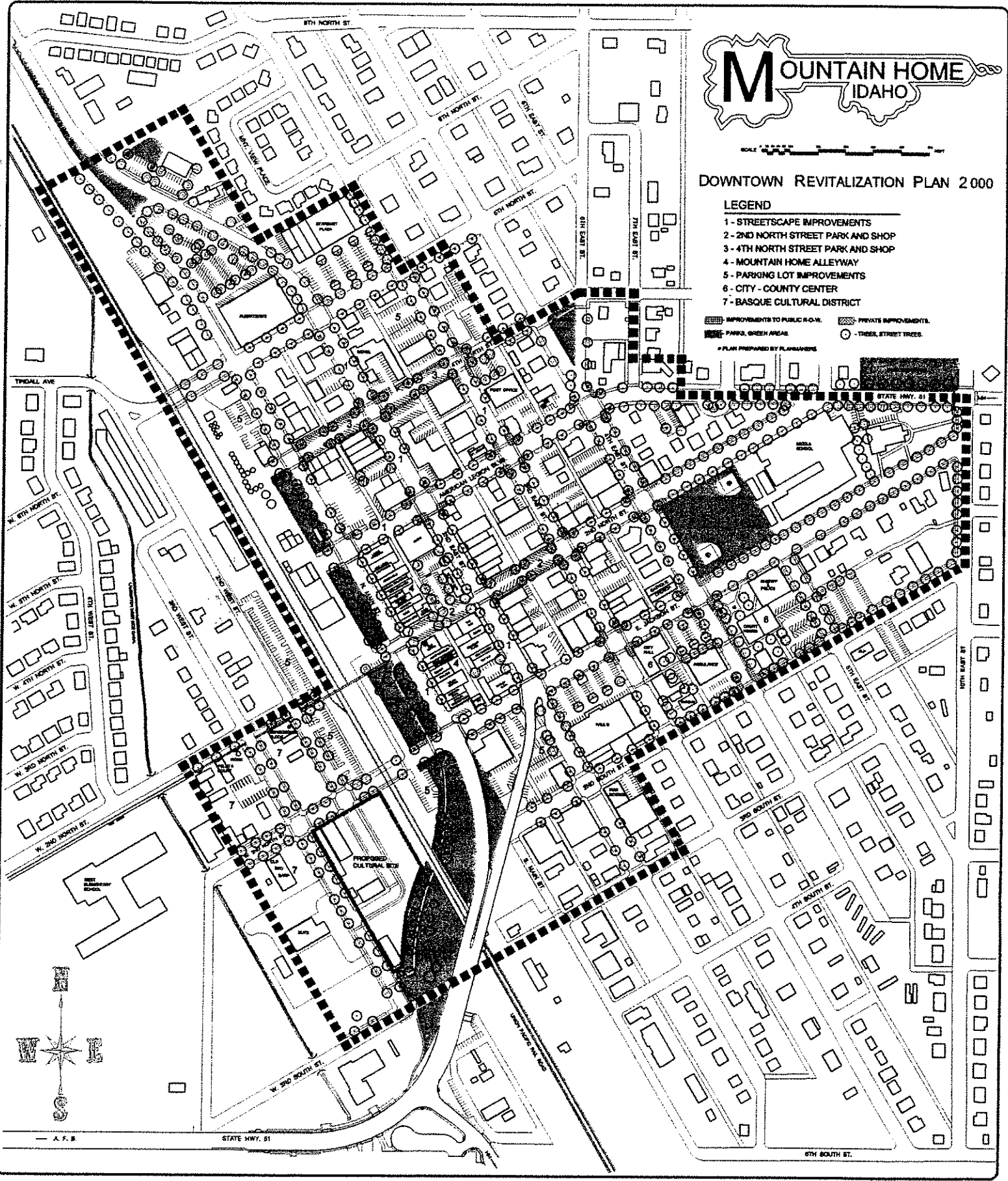
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN 2000

LEGEND

- 1 - STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
- 2 - 2ND NORTH STREET PARK AND SHOP
- 3 - 4TH NORTH STREET PARK AND SHOP
- 4 - MOUNTAIN HOME ALLEYWAY
- 5 - PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS
- 6 - CITY - COUNTY CENTER
- 7 - BASQUE CULTURAL DISTRICT

- IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC R.O.W.
- PARKS, GREEN AREAS
- PRIVATE IMPROVEMENTS
- TREES, STREET TREES

* PLAN PREPARED BY PLANNERS



A. F. B.

STATE HWY. 81

8TH SOUTH ST.

THE REVITALIZATION PLAN

TOWNSITE STREET NAMES

To create a new image and reduce confusion in finding downtown addresses, numbered streets in the downtown are to be returned to the original street names platted on the 1887 plat map (see history). Citizens who responded to our questionnaire found the present downtown numbering confusing and often gave up looking. As recommended, Main Street and American Legion Boulevard would remain and Jackson would change from a street to an avenue. 2nd East would be renamed Canyon Street; 3rd East changed to Bennett Street, 4th East Street in front of the County Courthouse would become Elmore Street. Likewise, 2nd South would be renamed Lockman Avenue, 2nd North - Atlanta Avenue, 4th North - Bert Avenue, and 5th North - Bruneau Avenue.

Mountain Home's first street was named Jackson Street in honor of Commodore Jackson, who filed on the 320 acres where the town now sits and who served as the first postmaster. American Legion Boulevard honors the American Legion, an organization, founded in 1919, of veterans of United States armed forces of World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.

RAILROAD UNDERPASS PROJECT

Transportation and streetscape improvements are key components of the downtown revitalization project. As part of the Interstate-84 Business loop, a \$12 million project is planned by the Idaho Transportation Department to replace the Mountain Home Railroad Underpass which is narrow and sometimes fills with water. Located just east of the old underpass, it would be expanded to four lanes. The old underpass structure would be maintained along with the pedestrian tunnel and connections. The old approaches would be landscaped.

While the new underpass will improve traffic flow passing through the downtown, it may result in higher speeds and potential conflicts with shoppers. Through automobile and truck traffic may increase pedestrian-auto conflicts while crossing streets or parking. These conflicts prevent the comfortable pedestrian environment needed for a family shopping area. To reduce these conflicts, streetscape and crosswalk improvements are proposed in the Streetscape section and the Mountain Home Alleyway Project.

Other projects call for improved bicycle and pedestrian improvements to serve the downtown and the Mountain Home Middle School. Other future transportation improvements include a traffic signal at American Legion Boulevard and 4th East Street.

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Mountain Home's central retail area requires more appeal for the pedestrian. An attractive streetscape improvement program for the city center will assure the downtown its place as the prime commercial destination and help to induce shopper traffic. Currently, many sidewalks present a difficult walking surface because they are worn and broken. Excessive traffic results in pedestrian-auto conflicts that prevent the



Sidewalk improvements, historic streetlights and street trees proposed for 2nd East Street.

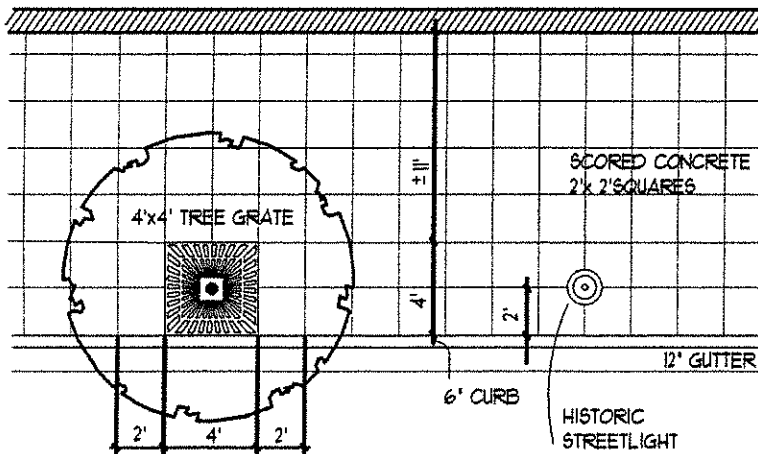
comfortable pedestrian environment needed for a family shopping area. The high volume of through-traffic conflicts with pedestrian movement and divides many streets into separated shopping areas, rather than one easily-traveled, integrated shopping area.

New sidewalk construction throughout most of the downtown is recommended to insure good pedestrian movement, improve walking safety, and provide an attractive entrance to businesses. An

improved sidewalk area, or streetscape, can play a major role in the revitalization of downtown. Consistent paving materials, streetlights, and trees can establish an overall singular identity. Such streetscape improvement would enhance the shopping and entertainment atmosphere by providing a comfortable environment and a unifying design theme throughout the downtown.

STREETSCAPE PROTOTYPE

As identified below, a streetscape prototype has been developed to guide future sidewalk construction in the downtown. All downtown projects should follow this design to establish a consistent theme and unifying city center. Dimensionally, the 300-foot by 256-foot blocks are served by 80-foot rights-of-way, with approximately 50 feet of street width and 15-foot wide sidewalks. The first phase would be Main and 2nd East streets.



STREET TREE W/ GRATE
Sidewalk detail

The texture of the shopping floor is an essential visual element of the city center. Scored concrete sidewalks are recommended. The sidewalk design includes two-by-two-foot scored square pattern. Utility sleeves are placed uniformly for lighting and irrigation needs. Utility improvements should coincide with the excavation of old sidewalk, when access is available and a cost saving can be realized.

Trees are centered in four by four-foot tree wells, located two feet six inches from the curb, with the tree well covered by a four

by four-foot tree grate with a breakaway center to accommodate tree growth. Trees are staggered between light fixtures and spaced to support business entrances and driveways. For areas of vandalism, tree guards should be installed to protect the trees.

EXPANDED INTERSECTIONS

At certain downtown intersections, the sidewalk can be widened by projecting the curb into the street, or bulbing of corners, thus minimizing the pedestrian street crossing distance. The design asserts an additional beneficial effect in encouraging traffic to slow down. Such sidewalk expansion will help reduce the conflicts generated by mixing vehicles and pedestrians.

CROSSWALKS

Clearly defined pedestrian crossings should be located at each intersection in the downtown. These crossings can be delineated with paint, tape or special paving that is permanent and easily recognized by automobile driver and pedestrian. Textural crosswalks at Jackson and 2nd North Street, American Legion and 10th, and Main and American Legion are recommended to help notify drivers they are entering a pedestrian area. Transitions from street to sidewalk should be ramped to aid crossing by the handicapped.

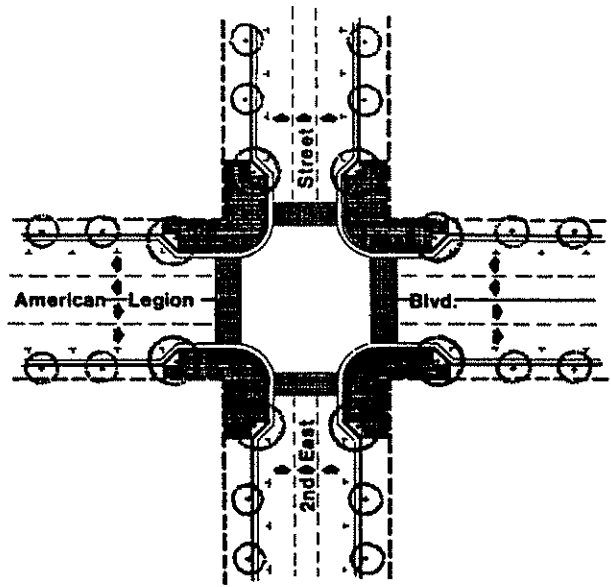
Key downtown intersections have been redesigned to reduce pedestrian-auto conflicts created by large volumes of automobile and truck traffic. Bulbed intersections on 2nd North and 4th North will slow traffic and emphasize pedestrian safety in crosswalks.

STREET TREES

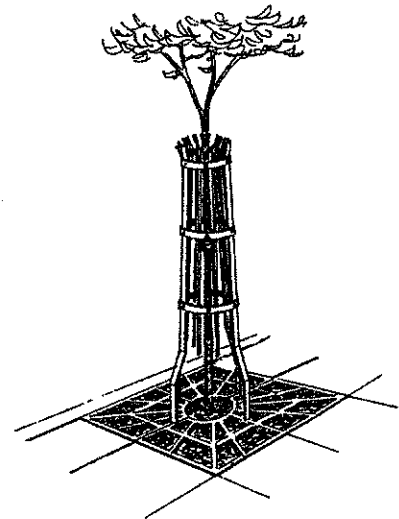
The addition of more trees to Mountain Home's downtown streets is a top priority. Historic photographs of the early city show that the downtown was lush with vegetation. Street trees were planted in front of new buildings. Trees, more than any other single element, enhance livability and provide a comfortable environment. Functionally, trees will work to cool sidewalks from the summer sun and to provide wind protection. Variations with hardy, upright branch structure and low maintenance, spaced thirty feet on centers, are recommended.

STREETLIGHTS

Like street trees, unique lighting provides a unifying environment, which is needed in the business district. Lighting will provide better illumination for pedestrians, lend character, and help to define the shopping district. It is recommended that ornamental light standards, similar to those that once graced Main Street, be returned to downtown. They would have fluted posts and single, energy-efficient globes. The historic lampposts would compliment modern traffic control and lighting poles used at intersections.



Typical intersection sidewalk design illustrates extension of sidewalks to emphasize pedestrian crossings and crosswalk treatment.



Street tree, grate and guard.

STREET FURNITURE

As identified below, a number of street furniture elements should be strategically located in the downtown.

Street Benches: Seating for pedestrians located to facilitate conversation and pedestrian viewing.

Allows visitors a rest from shopping.

Bicycle Parking: Bike racks are located in accessible high activity areas of the downtown.

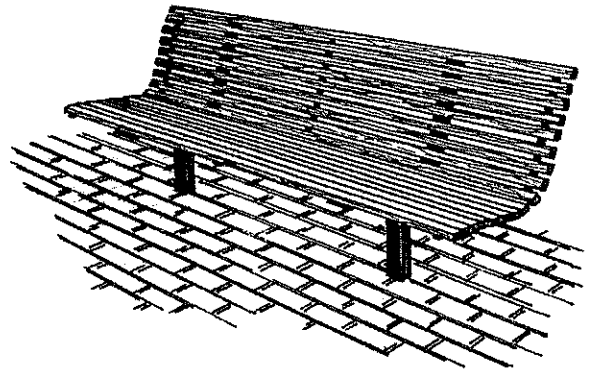
Kiosks: A few informational kiosks would accent the business district and serve as mirror of current events; see Basque Historic District.

Trash Receptacles: Non-imposing, small receptacles should be placed throughout the area to aid litter control.

Banner Wires: A few overhead wires on poles for banners, flags or promotions will assist in promoting special city events.

Drinking Fountains: Additional outdoor drinking fountains should be encouraged in order to serve the pedestrian environment.

Incorporating these important pedestrian amenities into the center of Mountain Home will create a pedestrian area with great appeal to shoppers and visitors. Such streetscape improvements will help to increase retail patronage, encourage private investment by creating a progressive environment for business actions, and carry over to create a vital new image for the city.



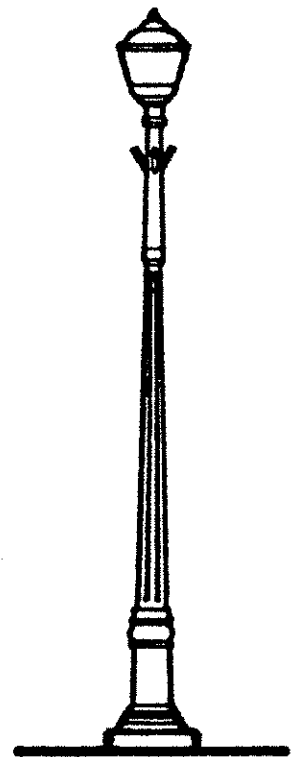
Sidewalk Bench

PARKING

A block-by-block inventory of both on-street and off-street parking was performed. Within the study area to the northeast of the railroad right-of-way are 575 on-street and 1,000 off-street public parking spaces, a total of 1,575. In the standard 300 by 256-foot blocks, on-street spaces average 27 per block ranging from 13 to 39, depending on the number of curb cuts and no-parking zones. Off-street parking spaces average 36 (from 6 to 65), varying with the number and size of private parking lots.

Currently, on-street parking is two hours, with a limited enforcement system. Downtown parking space standards call for dimensions of nine by 18 feet. Retail use requires a minimum of one space for each 300 square feet of floor space; restaurants are required to provide one space for each 100 square feet.

Overall, the downtown area has an adequate supply of parking spaces. Several causes give the opposite perception: Parking is limited on Block 2 (Mellen Building) where, historically, little space has been provided for parking; downtown parking is poorly identified, lacks signing, and most intended stalls are not marked or striped;



Single globe street light standard. Design based on historic photographs.

many parking lots are unimproved; with little identification, paving or landscaping which does not give downtown shoppers and users an impression of availability. There are other problems: many parking lots are restricted to serve only selected business, and many downtown employees are parking in convenient spaces that should remain available to shoppers.

PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mountain Home needs to manage its supply of downtown parking so that all uses can compete effectively. Such a management policy would provide the following:

1. Joint use of contiguous parking lots so that a shopper could park once and frequent several businesses in the area.
2. A business employee parking policy to encourage employees to park outside of the prime shopping district.
3. New parking lots are proposed to better serve the downtown. These include:

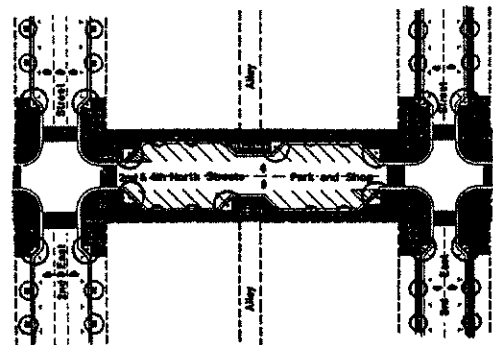
- A. Parking around the new Chamber of Commerce Building.
- B. On 3rd Street, a 44-space lot adjacent to Upper Cut.
- C. Parking lot on block adjacent to underpass.

4. The blocks of 2nd North and 4th North Streets between North Main and 3rd East Streets should be redesigned to change from parallel parking to angle parking, which would accommodate additional parking spaces (see Alleyway). These "Park and Shop" areas would provide centrally-located three-hour parking and let shoppers know that easy parking is available.



Example of angle parking, streetscape improvements and screened parking for 2nd North and 4th North streets.

5. It is recommended that an employee parking lot be developed at Jackson Street on the railroad right-of-way. Fencing the former Ice House site would reduce conflicts with the railroad tracks. Another fenced employee parking lot on the right-of-way is proposed along 2nd West Street across from the Bengoechea Block. The two locations, which should be developed cooperatively by DIG-IT, the Chamber of Commerce, City of Mountain Home and Union Pacific Railroad, offer close parking to serve the business district.



Park and shop areas can be created on 2nd North and 4th North by converting to angle parking and expanded sidewalks.

6. The City should establish a three-hour maximum parking time limit for public on-street spaces. With adequate enforcement and by discouraging employee parking, the three-hour time zones would provide adequate turnover with free and convenient parking for the downtown user and shopper. Shorter time zone hours may be set at some prime locations where quick turnover is required.
7. Downtown property owners, DIG-IT and the Chamber of Commerce should work together to improve and upgrade off-street parking lots serving the downtown. Costs of off-street parking improvements should be borne by those merchants whose customers will utilize them.
8. Downtown off-street parking lots should be paved, signed, striped and landscaped. To create an attractive shopping environment it is important that the parking lots be well screened from view by landscaping. The adjoining figure illustrates vegetation or lava rock walls, of four-foot height, that should screen off-street parking lots.

MOUNTAIN HOME ALLEYWAY PROJECT

A unique opportunity exists to revive two of the downtown's most historic blocks by upgrading the alleys that penetrate the blocks. Heavy traffic on the Main and 2nd East couplet reduces access to businesses in these blocks. To compensate, an attractive pedestrian spine would connect stores, small courtyards and parking. In effect, the alleyway blocks can be converted into a specialty shopping center. Currently, the backside of buildings display neglect, parking areas are unimproved and the alley is unappealing.

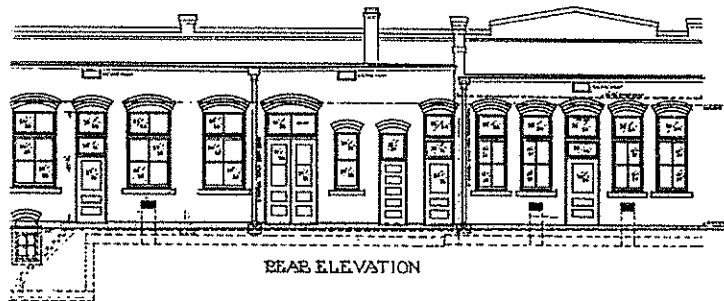


A windmill structure would help identify the Alleyway.

As illustrated on the following page, it is recommended that the sixteen-foot wide alleyway be improved with new lighting, pavement scoring, landscaping, signing and undergrounding of utilities. Key elements include gateway signing at both ends of the alleyway with parking and pedestrian connections on 2nd North Street that will help focus customer appeal. The concrete alley would have a saw cut surface to replicate the two by two pattern of the downtown sidewalks; see Streetscape) A number of new historic lights are to be mounted to building walls along the Alleyway. Vine wells would allow vegetation to grow up the side of buildings. Good signing and colorful historic murals would add to the charm. Traditional alley functions such as shipping, unloading and disposal of trash would continue.

Parking on 2nd North Street would become angle parking, increasing the number of spaces. The parking lot adjacent to the Deli would be paved and landscaped. Bulbed sidewalk intersections and crosswalks on 2nd North Street would provide increased pedestrian safety in connecting across 2nd East Street and crossing Main Street to Railroad Park.

Because many of the early buildings do not fully occupy the long 25 by 120-foot lots, the opportunity also exists for building expansions or highly individualized courtyard entrances to businesses for the alleyway side. A good example is the courtyard behind Cal's. Rear facades of a number of the buildings can be cleaned, painted or rehabilitated, picking up on the architectural character of each building. For example, the stone walls and arched windows of the backs of the McBrady, Ake, Weaver and Eckstein Block should be exposed.

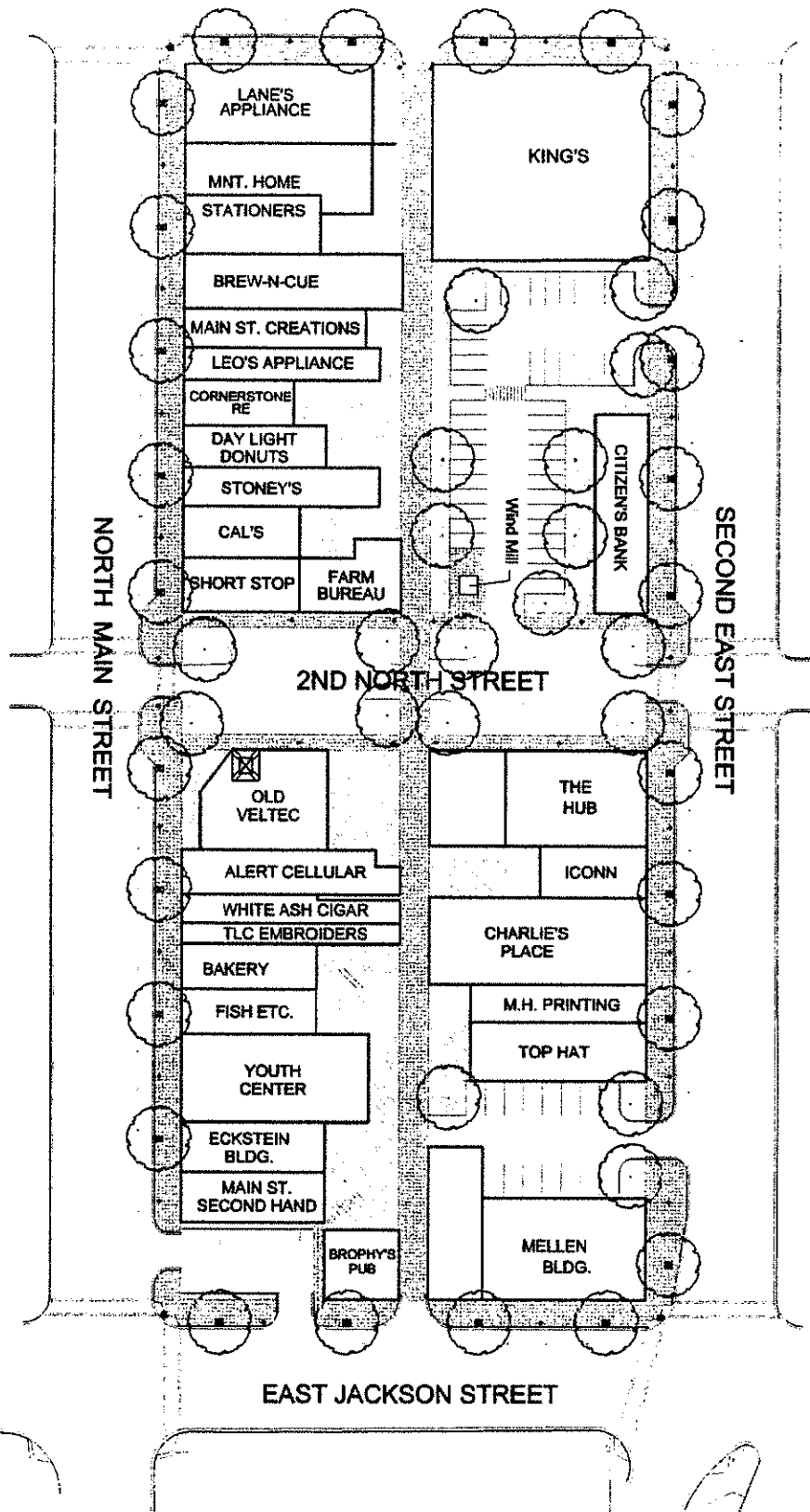


Numerous windows and doorways in rear elevation of McBrady-Eckstein Building.

Upgrading the alleys enhances the options for downtown pedestrian movement, and allows double-fronting of businesses, thus attracting customers from 2nd East Street, as well as through the main storefronts of North Main Street. Property owners in these blocks should join together to utilize and improve available parking on the blocks, and to establish central locations for collective storage of trash. Lava stone walls would be very appropriate in screening trash areas, as would vine wells along the alley.

The two block pedestrian alleyway has the potential to become an intensive retailing area with numerous shopping outlets between Kings on one end and a renovated Mellen on the other.

AMERICAN LEGION BOULEVARD



Mountain Home Alleyway



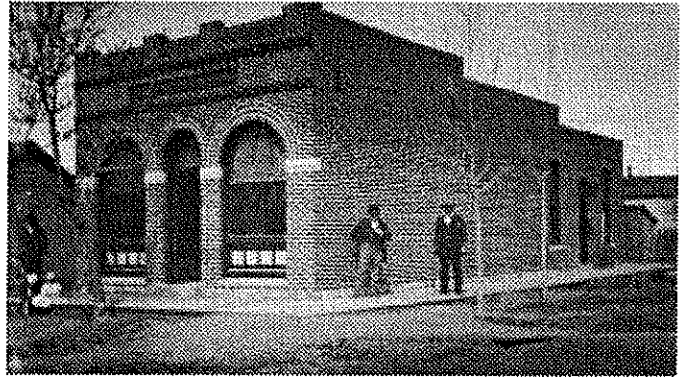
BUILDING REHABILITATION

Downtown Mountain Home contains a unique heritage, which cannot be duplicated. Thirty-three historic structures were identified in the Study Area; see Table 1. These buildings contribute an important physical resource for the community, and are key to revitalizing downtown.

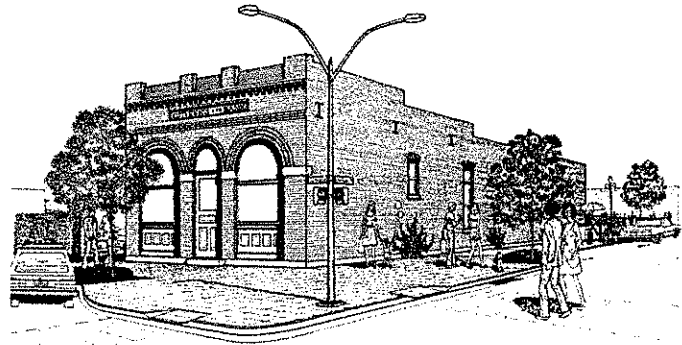
Besides providing a historic link to Mountain Home's heritage, a number of these buildings serve as landmarks to the community because of their size or unique architectural features. For example, the tower of the Bengoechea Hotel and the Spanish Mission tower on the corner of Main and 2nd North Street are points of orientation for downtown visitors. Likewise, the large three-story brick Mellen Building is highly visible from most downtown vantage points, as is the handsome Elmore County Courthouse. Others get their bearings from the Saint James Episcopal Church on American Legion Boulevard.

It is recommended that these historic buildings be rehabilitated to recapture the warmth and beauty they once had. To demonstrate Mountain Home's potential for rehabilitation, façade drawings have been prepared for the Mellen Building, Top Hat, Mountain Home Stationers, and four storefronts of the McBrady, Ake Weaver and Eckstein Block. These examples illustrate rehabilitated storefronts, sympathetic painting and tasteful signing. Making these buildings more functional and enhancing their storefronts will attract new tenants, additional patronage and create a favorable image.

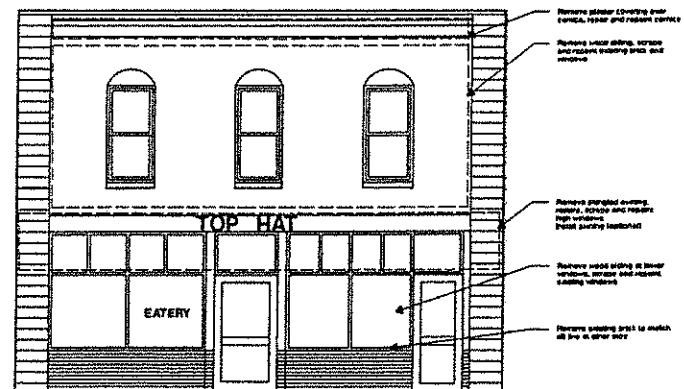
Sensitive rehabilitation starts with a review of historic photographs of the building, an understanding of its structural integrity and knowledge of its alterations over time. By enlisting the services of an architect and/or contractor, decisions can be made on how to best utilize all areas of the building, type of use and desired tenants. Decisions are also required on access into and through the building, new utility systems and attention to maintaining or recapturing the building's architectural character. Specific treatment and techniques are outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation. This is of particular importance since rehabilitation establishes eligibility for tax investment credits if the work meets specific guidelines and is certified. To take advantage of these tax credits, a Mountain Home Historic District should be inventoried and nominated to the



The Deli is one of Mountain Home's oldest buildings, built in 1895.



Rehabilitated Deli building and streetscape improvements complement the Mountain Home Alleyway.



Plans to repair, repaint and sign the Top Hat Building.

TABLE 1**DOWNTOWN MOUNTAIN HOME HISTORIC BUILDING INVENTORY**

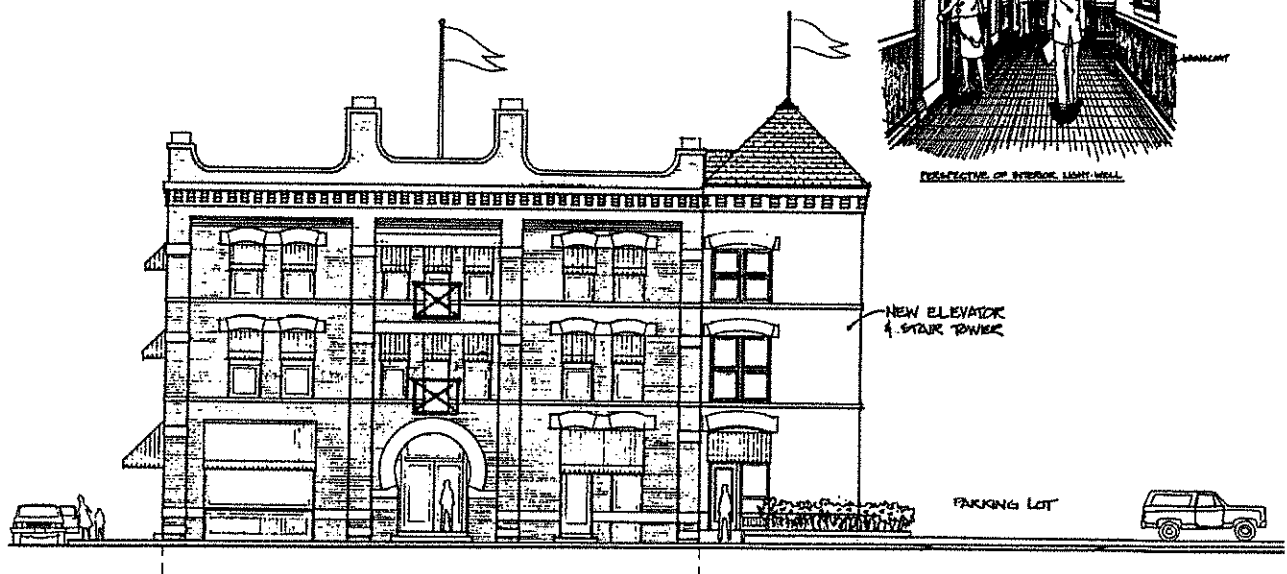
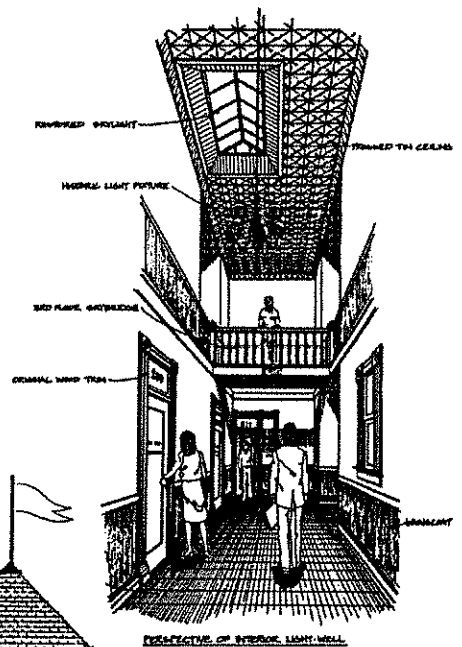
Map Key	Historic Name	Year Built	Present Name	Street Address
1	Pelota Court	1908	Pelota Court	135 W. 2 nd N.
2	Bengoechea Block	1910	Towne Square	195 N. 2 nd West
3	Pinkston Livery	1908	Red Barn	335 W. Jackson
4 & 5	McBrady, Ake, Weaver and Eckstein Block	1916	White Ash Cigar, TLC, Main St. Second Hand	130-150 N. Main
6	Veltex Station	c.1920	Love Abiding Church	190 N. Main
7	Wicho Building		Wicho Building	204 N. Main
8	Royal Club		Cal's	210 N. Main
9	Masonic Hall	c.1910	M.H. Stationeers	270 N. Main
10	1 st National Bank	c.1910	M.H. Stationeers	280 N. Main
11	Blunk Block	c.1920	Lanes' Appliance	290 N. Main
12	John Wilkins House	1903	Apartments	405 N. 2 nd East
13	Tye/Rork House	1896	Residence	450 Main Street
14	Citizen's Limited Bank	1895	Deli	205 E. 2 nd North
15	NA	c. 1910	Top Hat	125 N. 2 nd East
16	Mellen Hotel (Evans)	1900	Mellen Building	105 N. 2 nd East
17	Mather Residence	1907	Upper Cut	495 N. 3 rd East
18	Judge Cowan Home	1905	Tracy Real Estate	375 N. 3 rd East
19	St. James Episcopal Ch	1895	same	315 N. 3 rd East
20	Residence		Private Residence	195 N. 3 rd East
21	J.H. Garret Residence	1906	Emry Evans Res.	215 S. 3 rd East
22	Andrew Carnegie Library	1908	Elmore County Historical Foundation	190 N. 3 rd East
23	Longfellow Home	1901	Residence	395 E. 2 nd South
24	Elmore County Courthouse	1916	Elmore County Courthouse	150 S. 4 th East
25	Catholic Rectory	c. 1920	same	125 N. 4 th East
26	Residence	c. 1900	same	132 N. 4 th East
27	First Baptist Church	1908	Christian Center	310 N. 4 th East
28	Dr. Mary Bearby Home	1899	Residence	460 E. 2 nd N. St.
29	Mountain Home Middle School	1926	Mountain Home High School	105 N. 10 th East
30	Jackson-Prentice Home		Residence	585 E. Jackson
31	Blunk Home	1909	Residence	545 E. Jackson
32	NA	c. 1920	House of Rose	310 9 th East
33	Railroad Bridge	c. 1936	Highway 30 Railroad Bridge	Railroad Underpass

National Register of Historic Places. Similarly, a Mountain Home Historic Preservation Commission should be established to inventory and review alterations within the proposed district. As a Certified Local Government, the commission would be able to receive small grants from the Idaho State Historical Society to inventory buildings or prepare a walking tour brochure.

Landscaping designed to soften the sun and wind, and to add to downtown's visual quality, should accompany all building improvements. Key historic buildings to be rehabilitated include the Mellen Building, the McBrady,



Mellen Building rehabilitation with new elevator and stair tower and interior light well.

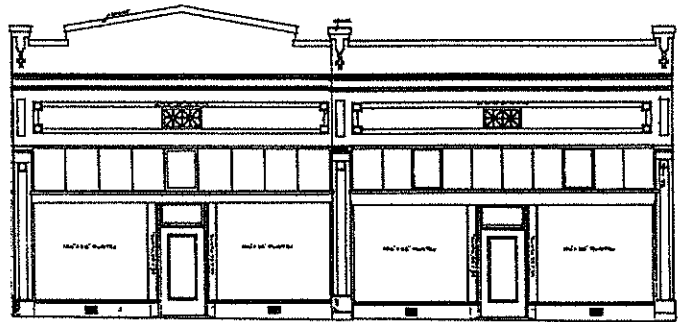
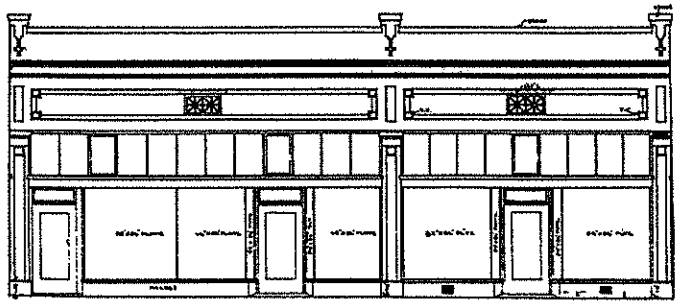


Ake, Weaver and Eckstein Block, the two-story brick Mountain Home Stationery Building and the mission-style old Veltex Station. Another significant structure to be rehabilitated is the Basque Pelota Court. Likewise, the Elmore County Courthouse designed by architects Wayland and Fennell needs rehabilitation. Likewise, St. James Episcopal Church should be rehabilitated including exterior lighting to show off its American Legion Boulevard location.



Built of sandstone in 1916, the central section burned in the 1970s.

Rehabilitation of existing buildings and new construction play an essential role in the process of city change, and should be encouraged. Existing building owners should establish a responsible maintenance program for both interior and exterior appearance. Improvement should include cleaning, painting, signing and rehabilitation of storefronts. New building design should be done to best reflect the surrounding physical character. New construction can utilize contemporary design, while respecting compatibility in its basic design elements of size, mass and material color with surrounding existing structures. All construction should strive for excellence in design.

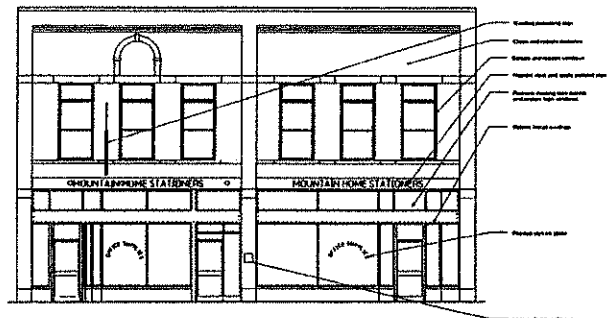


Plans for returning storefronts to their original character.

Fabric awnings that provide color and function are recommended for business storefronts. Installations can be flexible or fixed and mounted to withstand the city's wind. Fixed wooden awnings, as illustrated in early photographs (see photo on page ??), are also appropriate given the area's wind. Awnings reduce glare and help serve as energy savers by controlling the amount of sunlight penetrating the storefront.



Historic photograph of former Masonic Hall on Main Street, now M. H. Stationers. (ISHS 76-184.14)

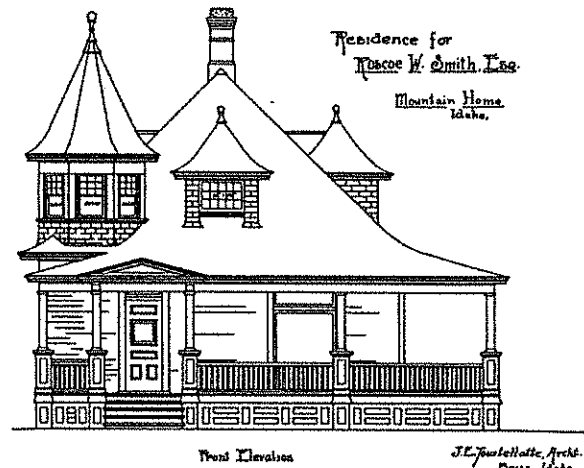


Proposed cleaning, painting and signing for Mountain Home Stationers.

DOWNTOWN HOMES IN MOUNTAIN HOME

An overlooked opportunity is to encourage the rehabilitation of a number of historic homes that still grace the downtown. Examples include the 1907 stone Mather home, now the Upper Cut, and the 1903 Queen Anne home of John Wilkins, now an apartment. As identified in Table 1, 13 historic homes in the downtown have been targeted for rehabilitation. DIG-IT would work with property owners to encourage new paint schemes. Owners would be encouraged to rehabilitate the homes for commercial and residential use complemented by gardens and parking. Seasonal outdoor lighting would be encouraged.

The original plans for the Roscoe W. Smith home and store building were recently found in the files of Boise architects. Roscoe Smith was one of the city's earliest druggists and operated Smith Drug for many years. The Smith residence, with its Victorian tower and wrap-around front porch, was built in 1909 from plans designed by J.E. Tourtellotte, now Hummel Architects. The fanciful home was occupied by the Wetherall family and moved in 1963 to make way for the post office at 4th North and 3rd East Street. Fortunately, the historic home was moved east of town (Hamilton Road) and continues to serve as a residence.

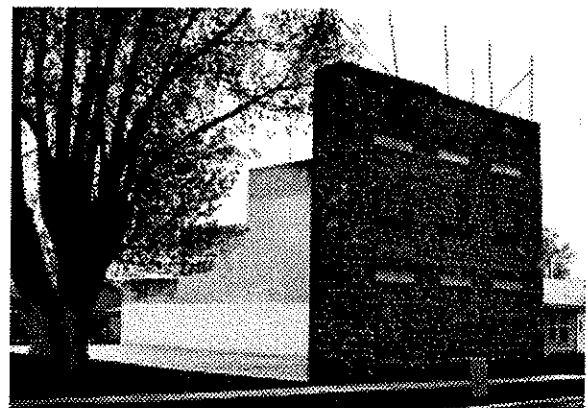


Roscoe Smith residence

BASQUE CULTURAL DISTRICT

Mountain Home has a unique Basque heritage that should be maintained. This cultural heritage is most evident in the existence of two Basque buildings located across the railroad right-of-way from the downtown. The 1910 three-story brick and stone Bengoechea Hotel is the most prominent. It was built by Jose Bengoechea, who was one of the most respected and successful Basque sheepmen in southern Idaho. This enclave of ethnic culture was a resting and wintering spot for numerous Basque sheepmen. By 1910 Mountain Home became the largest wool shipping center in the country.

One of the region's most significant structures is the nearby lava rock Fronton Court built by Pedro Anchustegui. The Fronton or Pelota Court is used for the game of jai alai, which is similar to handball. Constructed in 1908, the handsome stone building has recessed openings to imitate windows. The court represents the Basque lifestyle of working hard and playing hard. Recent improvements funded by the Idaho Heritage Trust and others include a new cement floor and wall repair.



Mountain Home Fronton Court built in 1908. Recently repaired and ready for sport in the Basque Cultural District.

It is recommended that establishing a Basque Cultural District, that includes the Bengoechea Hotel, Pelota Court and the nearby Old Red Barn, would retain the areas cultural and architectural heritage. The proposed two-block district would serve as a catalyst to insure that the area is preserved and that new development or modifications are in keeping with this unique area. The cultural

district is adjacent to the Elks meeting facility and West Elementary School. Other features include the Lambertson West Side Canal and the base of an early windmill located on the bend on 3rd West Street.

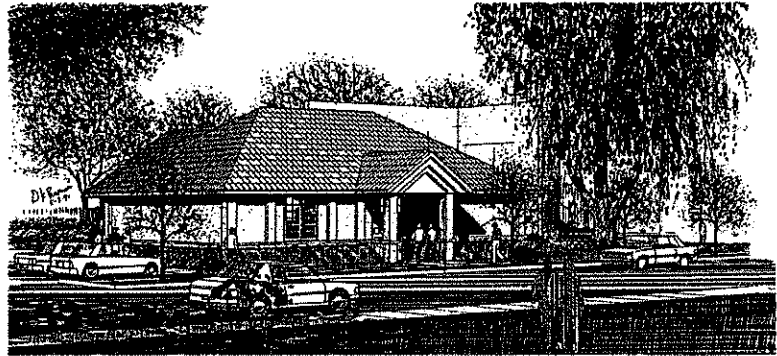
Efforts are underway by the local Euskal Lagunak group to repair the Fronton Court and build a Basque Center. The group has purchased the large vacant lot adjacent to the Bengoechea Hotel and prepared plans for a center. The center would

accommodate meeting space, kitchen and rest rooms. Optional plans include purchasing the historic Bengoechea Hotel and converting it into a Basque Center and Museum. Further opportunities for the area include rehabilitating the Old Red Barn into a flea market and developing a performing and meeting facility on the former A to Z Lumber Yard site; see below.



Bengoechea Block, part of the Basque Cultural District.

It is recommended that the City of Mountain Home and the community support improvements to the Basque Cultural District. Top priority is the restoration of the Fronton Court so that it can once again be a functional recreation resource to the community. Proposed improvements to the court site include an interpretive kiosk about the Fronton Court and Basque history. A good example is the interpretive sign at the Fronton Court in Jordan Valley, Oregon. Signs for court use are needed, as well as prohibiting skate boarding on the court. The court also needs an area for storage and maintenance, audience seating, a drinking fountain and a nearby bathroom. Other district improvements included repaired sidewalks, additional street trees and visitor parking.

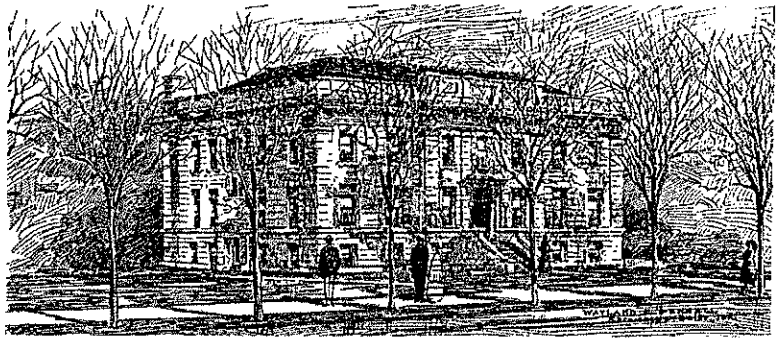


Concept drawing by architect Terry Scofield of Basque Center with meeting space and a kitchen.

The Basque Cultural District could host the Annual Shepherders Ball, the first Saturday in August, featuring lamb, booths and items from the Basque Country. It could also be the site of future NABO Conventions, often held in Mountain Home. The Basque Cultural District should foster self-guided tours, special cultural events, and regular jai alai competition. Special tournaments should be scheduled with similar Basque organizations with Fronton Courts in Boise, Elko, Nevada and Jordan Valley, Oregon.

CITY-COUNTY CENTER

A city county center is proposed to better link Elmore County and the City of Mountain Home. City Hall and the Elmore County Courthouse are adjacent to each other, which facilitates conducting of governmental business. Located next to City Hall, the Elmore County Historical Foundation is housed in the old Carnegie Library. Uses nearby include the Mountain Home Middle School and field, the Catholic Church, the War Memorial Hall, a residential neighborhood, and a number of law offices and title companies.



The Elmore County Courthouse is the cornerstone of the City-County Center.

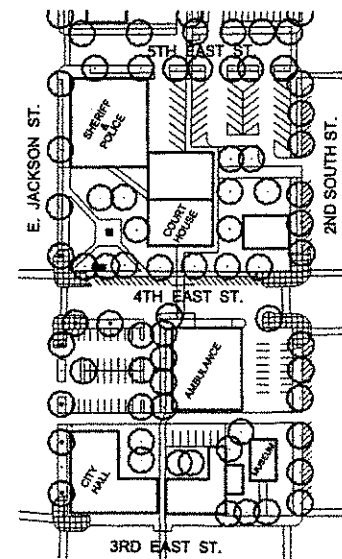
To enhance the function and attractiveness of the two-block area bounded by East Jackson, 3rd East, 2nd South and 5th East; improvements are outlined in the City County Center Concept Plan. They include property acquisition, additional parking, and building renovation and expansion. The site will become more pedestrian-friendly and comfortable through streetscape and landscape improvements.

Key actions include the City of Mountain Home purchasing the property adjacent to City Hall and expanding City Hall into the existing store building. Areas behind City Hall would be upgraded for parking and the existing cinder block building may become either sheriff/police parking or ambulance service. The county or other agencies may lease portions of the city space for offices, training, meeting space, and parking. Former city offices would then become available, allowing the Elmore County Historical Museum to expand with new exhibits. A small landscaped plaza and sidewalk would connect City Hall to the Courthouse. The pedestrian spine also connects to Paul's Market block at a mid-block crossing.

Elmore County would rehabilitate its handsome 1916 stone Courthouse and develop new office space with parking along 5th East Street. An addition is proposed for the back of the Courthouse and an expansion of the Sheriff/Police building is proposed, including a basement tunnel to the courthouse. The park environment on both sides of the courthouse and along 3rd East Street would be maintained. Near the Centennial Monument, a public memorial would pay tribute to citizens who served their country and community.

City County Center parking for use of city and county offices, jurors on duty, Sheriff/Police and employees is to be expanded. New parking lots proposals include building new lots behind City Hall and the Courthouse, expanding the lot at the corner of 5th East and 2nd South, and modifying on-street parking along 2nd South Street to angle parking similar to the parking in front of the Courthouse.

Additional street trees would be planted along 4th East Street and the Civic Center enhancing its park-like quality. Sidewalk crossings at both ends of 4th and a mid-block crossing in front of the Courthouse would be expanded to reduce pedestrian/automobile conflicts, see streetscape section.



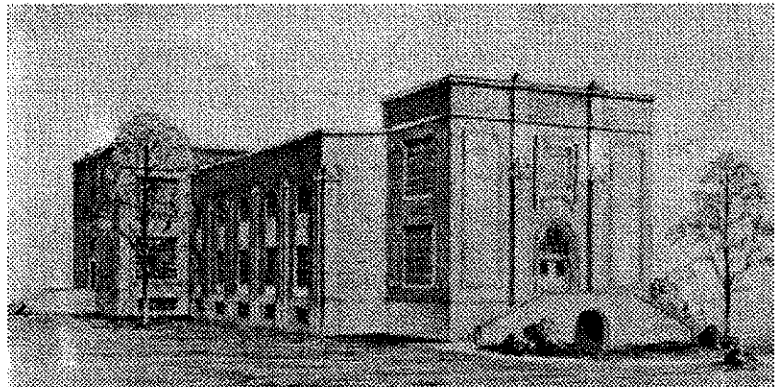
Proposed City-County Center Concept Plan.

MOUNTAIN HOME PERFORMING AND MEETING CENTER

One need consistently brought up by Mountain Home citizens is for a facility to house activities for the community. The city's Blue Ribbon Committee found the community does need new public recreation and cultural facilities. A new performing arts facility and meeting facility received public support. The committee is currently preparing conceptual plans, analyzing sites and identifying costs.

A to Z Lumber Site: One potential and accessible site that would compliment downtown is the vacant A to Z lumberyard property just north of the old underpass. The proposed multi-use facility would feature a hall for performing arts and meeting space for group use, conventions and seminars. The one block site is located between the old underpass, 3rd West and West 2nd North and the railroad tracks. Events could include plays, music, dance, and community, regional and national performances. A good model for use and operation is the Nampa Civic Center. Other bookings would be by schools, business and a local theater group. A multi-use facility would be a major compliment to the adjacent Basque Cultural District (see above) and the Elks (BPOE) facility, which accommodates 300 people.

Old Mountain Home High School: An interim facility to meet current cultural needs would be the rehabilitation of Hacker Annex, the old high school. Built in 1926, the old gym could be renovated for the production of concerts, plays and entertainment of various kinds. The basement area and adjacent classrooms could be utilized for dressing rooms, costume and set storage and a host of classrooms, rehearsal and exhibition space to support the arts, music and dance. This Triangle Property site, on the American Legion Boulevard entrance to downtown, would be landscaped to complement the city entrance, building and improved parking. An entrance feature and downtown welcome sign would grace the corners of Carl Miller Park and the Triangle Property at American Legion Boulevard and 10th East Street.

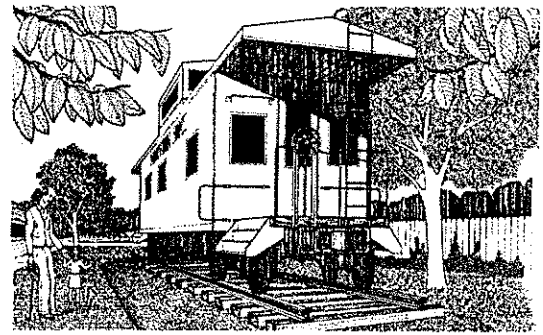


The old high school recycled into a cultural facility containing a theater, rehearsal space, classrooms and exhibition space.

PARKS

Downtown is now served by a number of well-maintained green spaces. These include historic Railroad Park, which is owned by Union Pacific Railroad and maintained by the City, and Memorial Park, the triangle park on 6th East Street which features the city Christmas tree. Nearby Carl Miller Park, named after the first Mountain Home casualty of World War I in 1919, hosts most outdoor civic events and forms the entrance to the downtown on American Legion Boulevard. The grassy, shaded park offers picnic tables, a covered area and rest rooms. An F-111 airplane stands as a tribute to Mountain Home Air Force Base. Annual events in the park include Air Force Appreciation Day, Easter egg hunts, Basque Picnic, Cinco de Mayo and summer concerts. Other open space in the downtown includes the Elmore County Courthouse lawn and one block playing field on the Middle School grounds. Other private vest-pocket parks include Cal's alley patio and Jones Park, featuring a lava rock enclosure and fountain on 2nd North Street adjacent to the Chamber of Commerce.

Railroad Park is the most important open space in the downtown because it serves as a buffer between the main line railroad tracks (65mph trains) and the business district. It also provides a green space for recreation and a focal point for downtown outdoor events. In the past it was a favorite place for visitors passing through the city to relax in the shade and get their bearings on their journey. The park is linear in nature, extending over three partial blocks. The Chamber of Commerce owns the railroad caboose on Railroad Park, which is lighted at Christmas.



Railroad Park caboose honoring the railroad history of Mountain Home.

It is recommended that Railroad Park be strengthened as a downtown park, and that it play a more active role in serving downtown. The park would continue as a prime place for conversation and relaxation for weary shoppers, downtown workers and visitors. A number of outdoor and civic events would be coordinated with business district promotions. Improvements would consist of tying the three park blocks together, and connecting them to downtown by expanded sidewalks connecting at 2nd North Street; See Mountain Home Alley Project. Other improvements would be additional landscaping, benches and fencing to help define the park and reduce the hazards to adjacent, heavily traveled roadways and railroad uses

Railroad Interpretive Sign: The Oregon Short Line Railroad, now the Union Pacific Railroad, was an instrumental force in establishing the City of Mountain Home. It is recommended that an interpretive sign be installed at 2nd North Street and Railroad Park commemorating the heritage of the founding of the city, the railroad and later the depot and water tower. The setting allows excellent views to the Basque Cultural District west of the railroad tracks, and through the downtown, to the picturesque mountains to the northeast.

ENTRYWAYS

Downtown Mountain Home is served by five access points, the three Interstate 84 freeway interchanges to the north and Highways 51, 67 and Old Highway 30 to the south. Mountain Home's entrances need to present an attractive and informative first impression. Landscaping, screening and tasteful signing should be encouraged on entryways in order to demonstrate the appeal of downtown. This is especially true of American Legion Boulevard, which should be landscaped and tree-lined to serve as the primary entrance to the city. Welcome and visitor information signs should be posted at major entrances to the city.

Panoramic views that portray the wide-open landscape of Mountain Home along the interstate should be preserved. For example, the eastbound I-84 traveler is provided a wide-open view overlooking the city with the Owyhee range in the background. The Desert Canyon Golf Course also presents an attractive view of the city. To enhance views along the interstate, existing pits should be cleaned up or screened, new billboards prohibited and open space created.

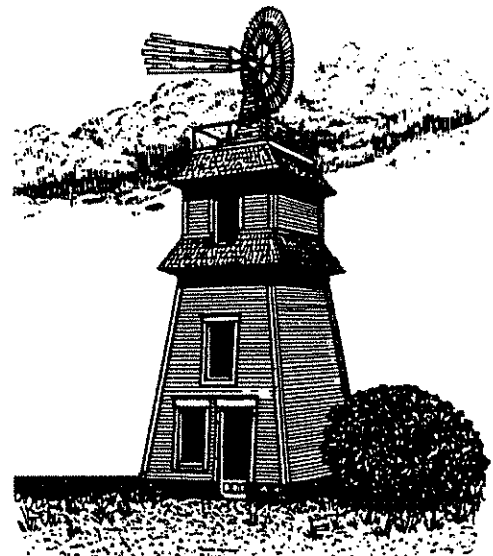
CITY ENTRANCE SIGNS

One of the best potentials for drawing visitors and shoppers into Mountain Home is to captivate their interest through good signing, with a message of a friendly city, services provided and points of interest. Highway guide signs for cultural sites such as the Basque Cultural District, Museum and other sites identified in the tourism development section may potentially be eligible. The I-84 and Highway 20 interchange is designated

as the “City Center Entrance”. It is the main gateway into the city with American Legion Boulevard being a four-lane, tree lined approach to downtown. This central entrance offers traveler information at the Desert Mountain Visitor Center.

MOUNTAIN HOME WINDMILL

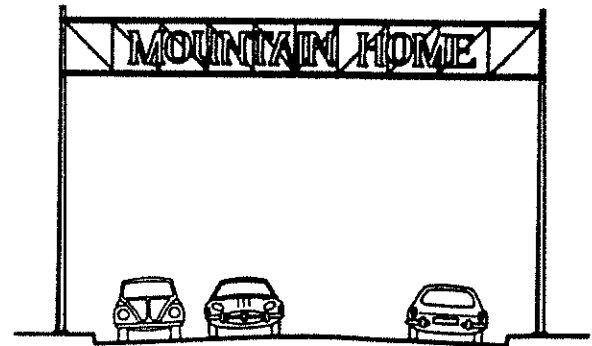
To further highlight the City Center Entrance, it is recommended that a unique point of interest be located near the visitor center. A functional windmill structure, like that portrayed, could be a key symbol helping identify Mountain Home. As shown in the historic photograph, windmills were common in the city, providing windmill-powered water pumps that served early residents. Besides being a point of visual interest, the windmill could be functional, pumping water for landscaping and supplementing the power needed for signing and lighting. Another windmills is proposed to be built in the downtown.



Proposed windmill structure at I-84 and the City Center Entrance.

DOWNTOWN GATEWAY

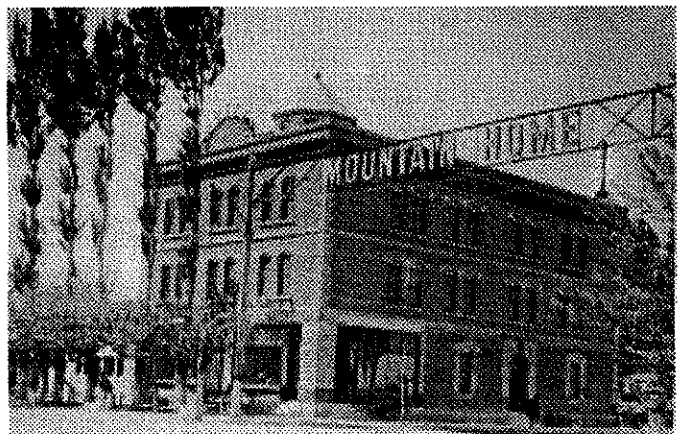
Arrival to the downtown business district can be strengthened by a visual gateway that tells residents and visitors that they are entering a city center that has much to offer. As illustrated, a gateway sign similar to one formerly over 2nd North Street, near the railroad tracks is proposed. The gateway sign would be located on American Legion Boulevard between Carl Miller Park and the Mountain Home Middle School. In the interim, an overhead banner wire could be used for banners and flags in coordination with special city events.



Mountain Home gateway sign.

BUSINESS SIGNS

Signs function to promote individual businesses with identification and contribute to the public's perception of each business. Signs also play a role in creating the overall visual character of the business district. Each sign can enhance the image of the entire business district, or detract from it. Signing should strive to unify downtown, rather than provide competing clutter. Good signing expresses a simple, clean message. Flat fixed signs or individual raised letters should be positioned on or above storefronts and may be complemented by small, pedestrian-oriented hanging signs. Projecting signs may help vehicular traffic identify key business or buildings. Attractive window lettering or window graphics can also identify and add character to window displays.



Former Mountain Home sign facing railroad depot, near Bengoechea Hotel

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Mountain Home has the opportunity to expand its visitor and tourism economy. Commercial activity related to visitors has already grown significantly at the I-84 and U.S. 20 highway junction. Being the location of the Desert Mountain Visitor Center, it is an excellent place to disseminate information on numerous things to see and do in the area. The center provides year-round service and is maintained by a part-time staff and volunteers. An open-air gazebo complements the center.

Tourism can play a larger role in the economic health of the downtown. Interstate-84 with its three entrances into Mountain Home is ideal to service visitors. Mountain Home has the opportunity to serve as a base camp, providing hotel rooms, RV camping, restaurants, services, special events and shopping.

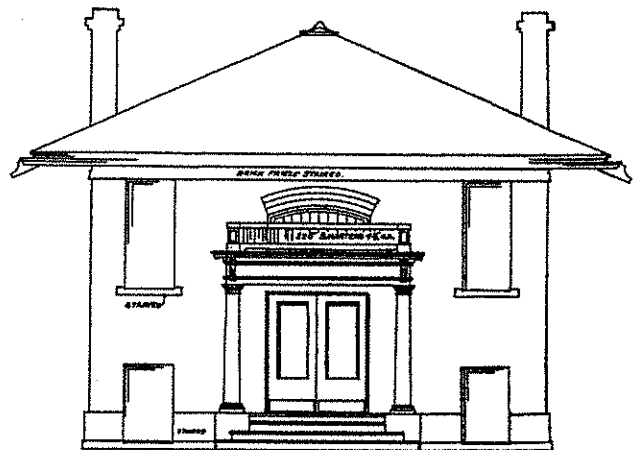
Tourism development for the area is a long-term investment that requires planning and action. A Mountain Home tourism development plan would provide the community and local business leaders with the knowledge and actions enabling them to effectively realize an expanding tourism potential. Lack of action or direction could result in less desirable development or competition taking a larger share of the market. Key partners include the Elmore County Travel & Tourism Committee, Southwest Idaho Travel Association, a regional organization involved in planning and implementing marketing efforts for the region, and the Idaho Division of Tourism.

The area is blessed with good weather. Two key downtown visitor attractions, the Basque Cultural District and the proposed Performing Center were identified earlier. The expanded Desert Canyon Golf Course is an excellent facility and is very visible from I-84. Other potential historic, natural or cultural sites are identified below.

ELMORE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Located on South 3rd East adjacent to city hall, the museum is housed in the Carnegie Library built in 1908 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The collection includes Native American and Chinese artifacts, historic photographs, farming tools and clothing. The museum is open spring through fall on Fridays and Saturdays from 1:30 to 4:30. The museum is managed by a non-profit board and staffed by volunteers.

A number of artifacts are displayed on the site, including a bust of Richard McKenna, the Mountain Home resident who wrote the "The Sand Pebbles." The city's most famous writer lived at 208 E. 4th Street and the alternative school is named McKenna High School. The museum has a wonderful building and collection but needs to be open more and provide community history programs. Improved funding sources are needed to provide staffing assistance and expand exhibits, interpretation and education programs.



Elmore County Historical Museum – part of the City-County Center.

Other historical potential includes walking and driving tours or the rehabilitation of the old Veltex Station into a 1920-50s style auto travel museum commemorating travel along U.S. 30 down Main Street.

MOUNTAIN HOME AERO HERITAGE FOUNDATION

As the symbol of the United States fighter plane in Carl Miller Park indicates, Mountain Home is proud of its Air Force history. Expanding on this theme, a non-profit group has formed to preserve and protect the history of the 366th Wing and Mountain Home Air Force Base. The Mountain Home Aero-Heritage Foundation, Inc. will provide a place where the public can view the aircraft assigned to the wing over the years, wing memorabilia, and other items pertaining to Air Force history. The Heritage Center on the base would be leased to the non-profit group who would provide a park with static display of historical wing aircraft and a heritage center where visitors can browse. The non-profit foundation is made up of military and civilian members and seeks to expand. Plans for the foundation include raising funds, securing the site, collecting artifacts and displaying additional aircraft such as a CS-135, a B-52 and a F-15E.

Constructed during World War II as a bomber-training facility, the Mountain Home Air Force Base has since been utilized as a specialized base for sophisticated airborne units. Its dry, high elevation, and expanded training range make it an ideal location. The federal government has made a significant long-range commitment of the base, and today, the base is the strongest economic generator in Elmore County.

To assist this effort of preserving Air Force history, displaying period planes and educating the public, the city, county, Chamber of Commerce and public are encouraged to support the Aero Heritage Foundation efforts to raise funds and operate the park. Donations are being sought from corporations and the public. Future traveling exhibits may be able to come from the Air Force Museum, the Tillamook Air Museum in Oregon and the Boeing Company Museum in Seattle. A feasibility study to assist the foundation in developing Heritage Park and Center should be undertaken by the Elmore County Impact Steering Committee.

MOUNTAIN HOME RESERVOIR

Easily accessible from U.S. 20 and I-84, the Mountain Home Reservoir just north of the city offers a refreshing water resource for the public. A master plan is needed to guide improvements that would include a picnic area, swimming area and entry beautification. Other improvements may include bicycle/pedestrian path connecting to the city from Reservoir Road and 18th East Street.

RATTLESNAKE JUNCTION AND OREGON TRAIL BYWAY

Mountain's Home's unique position on the Oregon Trail calls for expanding interpretive information for the old stage station Rattlesnake Junction (see history) and the Oregon Trail crossing Highway U.S. 20. This should include designating, marking and developing self-guided tour information to travel the Oregon Trail along a Backcounty Byway. The Bureau of Land Management should be encouraged to designate the byway along the Oregon Trail from U.S. 20 through Mayfield and Bonneville Point and connecting to I-84 at Blacks Creek. Likewise, going east opposite the historical sign on U.S. 20, the tour would go three miles to Teapot Dome, then on to Hot Springs Creek, which is rich in sulfur, iron and magnesia and once a favorite with Native Americans. The byway should continue on to Glens Ferry and Three Island State Park, a famous landmark for Oregon Trail emigrants.

CRATER RINGS VIEW POINT

Standing out on the sagebrush horizon near Mountain Home is a pair of volcanic crater rings that can easily be visited just off of I-84. Owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management the rings are adjacent to the Snake River Birds of Prey Area, a protected home to one of the world's densest concentration of nesting birds of prey. Less than 5 miles from the west I-84 interchange, the rings can be reached by following the old highway parallel to I-84, turn south on Cinder Butte Road, then turn southwesterly 2.7 miles to the rim of the craters.

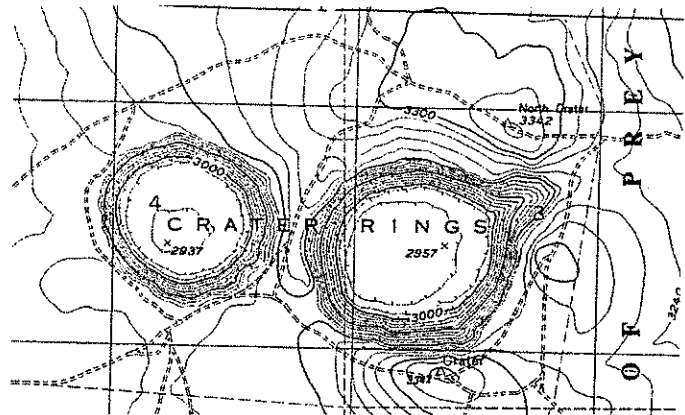
The crater rings are twin circular depressions formed about 1.4 million years ago in the basalt of the Bruneau Formation. Slightly less than one-half-mile across, they are about 200 feet deep and 400 yards apart. Geologists indicate a vent formed at the site of the larger of the two crater rings and extruded a lava cone estimated to have been 150 feet high. The cone collapsed, then reformed exploding magma over a 1 1/2-square mile area. The inward collapse formed the pits. Crater Rings are associated with a fault zone and a dozen or more fissure caves along these zones. The landmark is designated a National Natural Landmark. Unfortunately, the rings have been mined and much of the areas volcanic rock has been removed for landscaping use.

It is recommended that the city and county encourage the BLM to study the site for potential public use. Potential improvements could include a reclamation project to return the site to its natural appearance. Other improvements would be interpretive information, hiking trails, viewpoints, picnic area, camping, access road and parking.

NEARBY RECREATION

Just minutes north of the city, U.S. Highway 20 provides a combination of points of interest, excellent fishing, scenery and beautiful campsites. Points of interest include Castle Rock Road, an area of granite formations of pinnacles and towers, South Fork of the Boise River, Anderson Ranch Reservoir, and the beautiful Trinity Lakes. Much of this area is managed by the Boise National Forest Mountain Home Ranger District.

A southern loop tour takes you through irrigated farmland to Glens Ferry, and on to C. J. Strike Reservoir, Snake River, Bruneau Canyon Overlook and Bruneau Dunes State Park, featuring the tallest single-structure sand dunes in North America. Oregon Trail ruts can be found along the South Alternate Route, or "Dry Route."



Crater Rings National Natural Landmark located near I-84.

IMPLEMENTATION

A strong and appealing downtown is of undisputed importance to the well being of Mountain Home. Implementing the recommended plan will lead to expanded patronage, increased retail sales, higher property values, and additional private investment for the city. The revitalized downtown will also create a fresh image for the city, generate a feeling of pride among residents, and be a natural draw for visitors. This revitalization would occur through the related actions of the public and private sectors, utilizing the plan as a blueprint around which a working partnership can operate.

The planning effort, funded by DIG-IT, the Chamber of Commerce and City of Mountain Home, has served as a catalyst for revitalization and provided the initial momentum needed to allow the downtown to become more viable and attractive. Continued management and action is now called for to implement the recommended plan, which may require up to ten years to accomplish.

A good working partnership of DIG-IT, ECISC, Mountain Home Chamber of Commerce and the City of Mountain Home exists to stimulate and coordinate the implementation of the plan. DIG-IT, which initiated Clean the Town Day in April and the Mountain Home Downtown Revitalization Plan, will continue to lead the revitalization project. Likewise, enthusiasm, cooperative action, advertising and individual merchandising efforts are all essential to downtown's success.

The key person to oversee the downtown revitalization would be a full time project coordinator. The project coordinator would be selected by DIG-IT and ECIS and be responsible for guiding and facilitating private and public downtown development. The position would be similar to that of the project manager of the Main Street Program conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The project coordinator would be funded from both private and public funds. His/her scope of work would include day-to-day action and the responsibility for implementing the plan

The public sector would be responsible for such public improvements to the downtown as street upgrading, street lights, parking management and enforcement, parks, public signing, sewer, fire and water improvements, overall planning, coordination and administration.

City funding to accomplish these tasks can be received through the annual city capital improvement fund. The city's capital improvement program and budget would involve scheduling physical improvements for the downtown over a period of time with consideration for priorities and the financial capabilities of the community. Current incentives include the city paying up to 50 % of sidewalk work and a \$500 match from the city Beautification Advisory Board for building renovation.

Other federal and state funds may be available, depending on project eligibility and the reshaping of public programs. The City of Mountain Home and ECISC should immediately seek new funding sources to implement the plan. Potential sources include the Idaho Department of Commerce Block Grant Program and transportation funding available for enhancement and safety projects.

The benefits of revitalizing the downtown are sufficiently attractive to the business sector to justify committing private capital for improvements that will increase sales and business. One option is for private landowners

MOUNTAIN HOME IDAHO

SCALE 1" = 100'

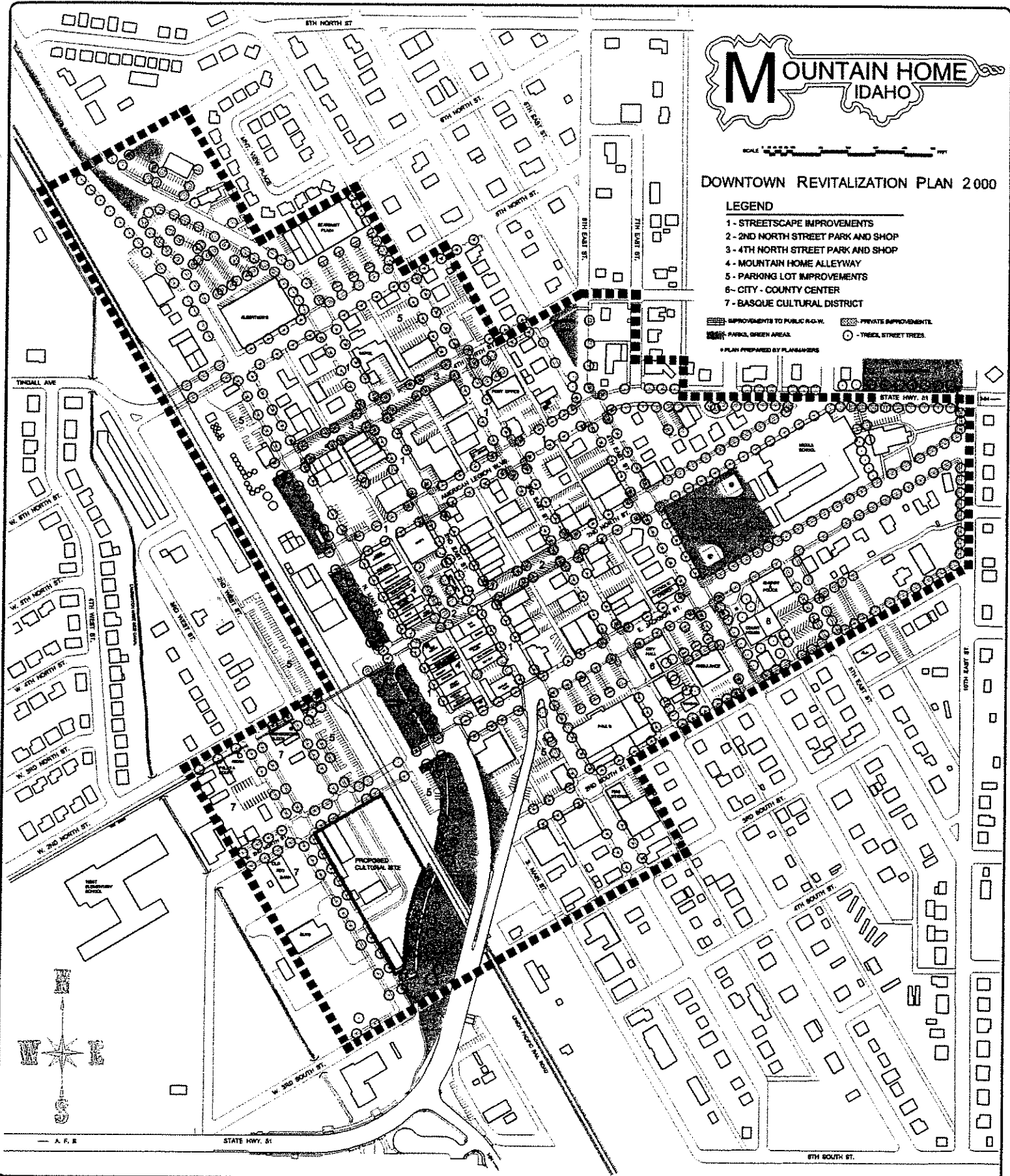
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN 2000

LEGEND

- 1 - STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
- 2 - 2ND NORTH STREET PARK AND SHOP
- 3 - 4TH NORTH STREET PARK AND SHOP
- 4 - MOUNTAIN HOME ALLEYWAY
- 5 - PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS
- 6 - CITY - COUNTY CENTER
- 7 - BASQUE CULTURAL DISTRICT

- ▨ IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC R.O.W.
- ▨ PRIVATE IMPROVEMENTS
- ▨ PARKS, GREEN AREAS
- TRUNK STREET TREES

PLAN PREPARED BY PLANNERS



within the study area to form a local improvement district as a method of extending streetscape and parking improvements over a period of years. Under such a district, the city government can assess individual property owners for specific public improvements, which will improve the downtown business climate. Another potential is forming a business improvement district to allow area businesses to raise funds for promotion and events.

A coordinated strategy for revitalization is required. Initially, small tasks should be accomplished in order to give the downtown confidence. An incremental self-help approach will be more beneficial and longer lasting than relying on big projects to revitalize the city center. Strong participation by the private sector will sharpen their entrepreneurial skills and allow the self-reliance needed for long-term success. The first phase emphasizes streetscape improvements, the Mountain Home Alleyway Project, expanded parking and building rehabilitation.

The Mountain Home Downtown Revitalization Plan serves as a blueprint for action and requires an on-going evolution of support, city approval, funding and dedication to bring the plan to fruition. The plan should be utilized as a working document for developing policies, determining design details, setting priorities, and guiding development. The plan would serve to encourage and guide property owners, merchants, DIG-IT members, Chamber of Commerce members and city officials.

HISTORY OF MOUNTAIN HOME

The community of Mountain Home was settled in 1881 on the new Oregon Short Line Railroad. The plat for the original Mountain Home townsite was prepared by the Idaho & Oregon Land Improvement co. in 1883. It was officially recorded in 1887, three years prior to statehood. The earlier Mountain Home was not called that until 1877 when a post office was established there. Before that it had been known as Rattlesnake Station. Located at the place where Rattlesnake Creek came out of the hills, the station had been a camping place on the Oregon Trail, a stage stop on the Kelton Road, and the junction point where travelers bound for Rocky Bar and other mountain mining camps headed north.

Mountain Home, Idaho, was started in 1881 when people from an earlier settlement at the foot of mountains to the north moved their town to the location of the Oregon Short Line railroad then being built across Idaho. Idahoans had wanted a railroad for a long time. To people living in such a vast and sparsely settled region, this railroad link with the eastern states and the Pacific Coast was vital. They expected that it would bring settlers, open new markets, and insure prosperity.

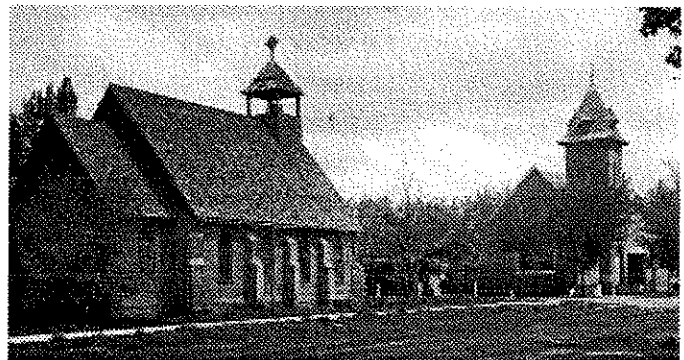


Former Mountain Home passenger depot and water tank. (ISHS P1987.0006.0001)

The Oregon Short Line right-of-way passed 7 miles south of the original settlement. It ran through the desert claim of Commodore Jackson. W.J. Turner, who had arrived from the east with his family in August, 1881, went to work for Jackson, farming part of the land, which became Mountain Home. He built a house there, and grew crops of grain in 1882 and 1883. Turner secured the contract to build the railroad grade through the new townsite in the spring of 1883, after Jackson had sold the land to the railroad for \$5000. Mrs. Turner recalled years later that the first locomotive had arrived at Tutville, the construction camp of the railroad, on July 7, 1883.

When Mountain Home was laid out on the railroad in 1883, the area was part of Alturas County. It was only after years of politicking and intrigue that Mountain Home people secured the establishment of the new county of Elmore in 1889. On February 4, 1891, Mountain Home became the county seat.

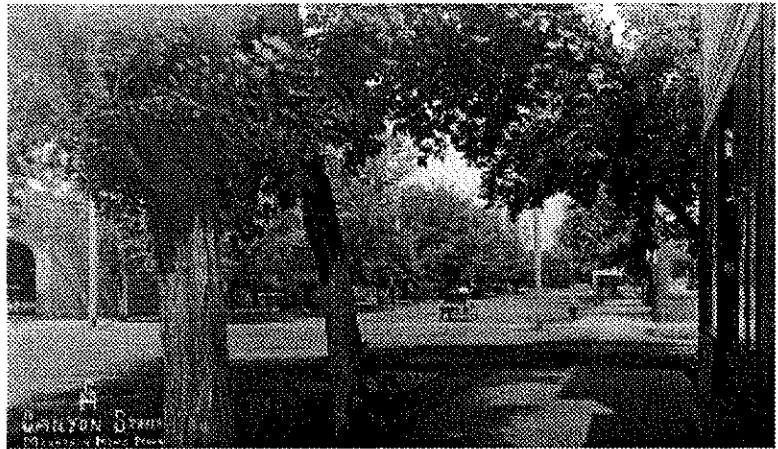
Almost from the beginning, the people of Mountain Home took pride in their small desert community and labored to make it a pleasant oasis. Trees were planted, sidewalks built, and streets sprinkled regularly to keep the dust down. By 1900, the 17-year-old town had begun to change into a settled character much different from the raw wooden railroad town of the eighties. There were about 1000 people, and many of the business buildings were constructed of brick and stone. The Episcopal Church was built of brick that year, and



St. James Episcopal Church and former Congregational Church.

the Congregationalists and Baptists also had good buildings. A large brick schoolhouse was a matter of much local pride, as was "a fine little library." A few years later, this one-room library would have a building of its own.

Robert E. Strahorn, energetic promoter and publicist for the Idaho & Oregon Land Improvement Company platted the new townsite that fall. Corner lots sold for \$50 and inside lots for \$25. W.J. Turner, who was in on the enterprise from the beginning, helped plat the town and built a restaurant and hotel. The Turner House was the center of Mountain Home's activities for a generation, and a number of early pictures show its expansion with the town. (Turner would later erect what is still Mountain Home's largest downtown building, the Mellen Hotel).



Photograph of 2nd Street East, formerly Canyon Street, illustrating tree-lined streets.

In the early years of the century every Idaho community had a town baseball team. Local sponsors in the business community supplied uniforms and bought equipment to assist local athletes uphold the honor and prestige of the town. One of the early promoters who supported a town team was John H. Garrett, organizer of the Great Western Sugar Co. Like many another early Idaho promoters, Garrett's genius lay in getting other people to invest their money in his projects. He inevitably made enemies as well as friends and admirers. One old-timer said that Garrett hit Mountain Home with "a bang" made a lot of promises, and that many incidents were remembered about him. "Some are favorable, but more are not, was this pioneer's blunt comment. Certainly Garrett produced a climate of optimism in Mountain Home. He left behind some solid accomplishments, including completion of Long Tom and Camas dams.

Downtown Mountain Home in the 1880's was a typical western town. Its principal businesses were in wooden frame buildings with false fronts. As befitted a small town, whose existence depended upon the railroad, these buildings faced the tracks. The false fronts designed to make buildings look a story taller than they were, also served as showy billboards for advertising in large letters what the town had to offer. The Turner House was one of the largest, with a second story verandah. By 1890, a photo of this row facing the tracks shows two saloons, two hotels, and a general store.



Groundbreaking ceremony showing one of the many windmills located in Mountain Home.

Mountain Home's architectural character was gradually enhanced as new buildings were erected, each playing its part in the city's awareness of its progress and identity. Many still survive as landmarks of Mountain Home's "coming of age" as an established community. The promotional literature of the early days expresses clearly the town's need for permanence and stability, as well as pride in its accomplishments to date. In 1908,

REVISED MAP OF MOUNTAIN HOME IDAHO

SITUATED IN SEC'S 25 & 26, T³S. R⁶E. B.M.

PROPERTY OF
THE
IDAHO & OREGON LAND IMPROVE'T CO.

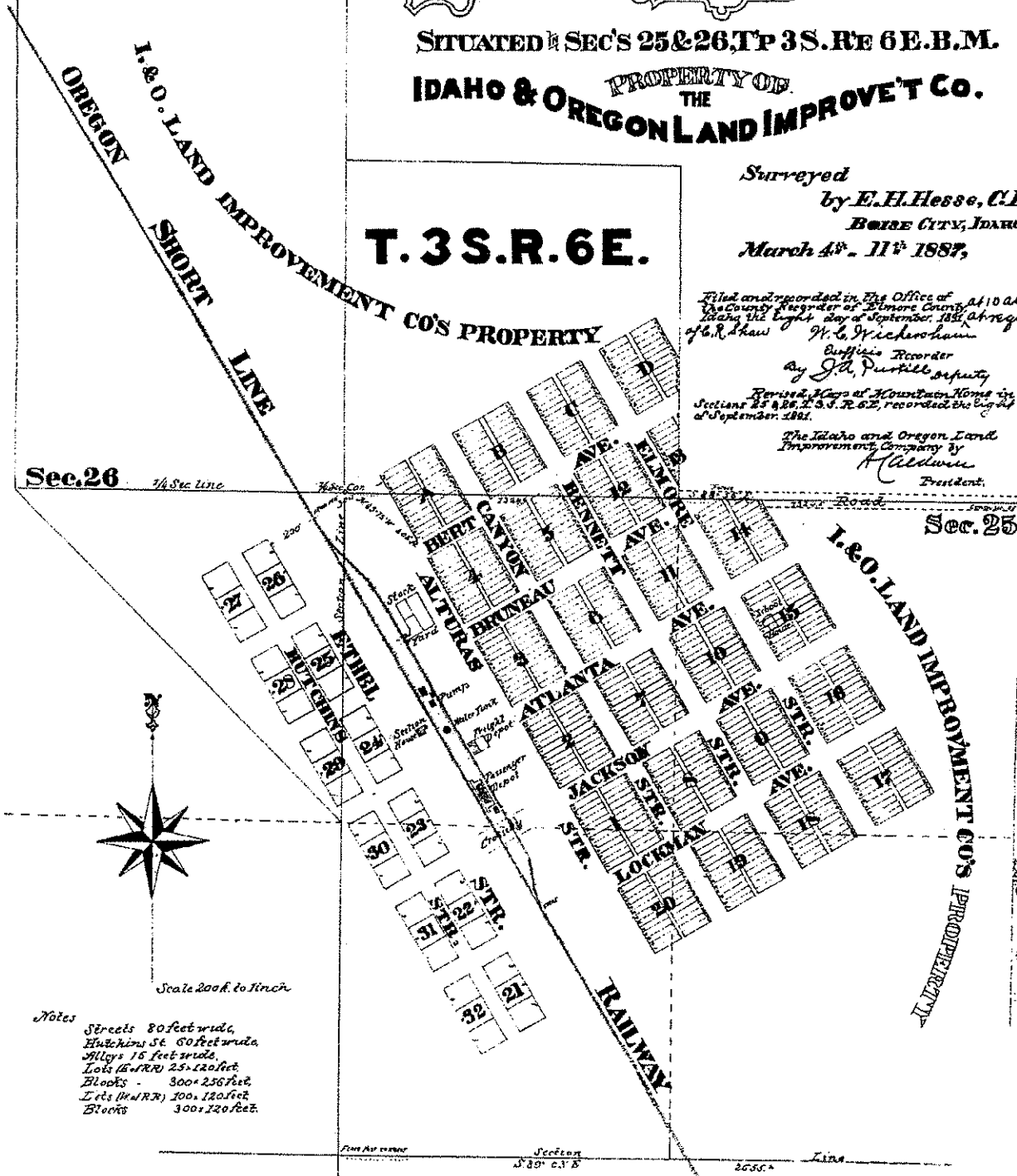
Surveyed
by E.H. Hesse, C.E.
BOISE CITY, IDAHO
March 4th - 11th 1887,

T. 3 S. R. 6 E.

Filed and recorded in the Office of
the County Recorder of Blaine County, Idaho, at 10 and
during the eight day of September, 1887, at request
of G.R. Shaw W.C. Wickesoham
Suffice Recorder
By J.H. Purtille, deputy

Revised Plans of Mountain Home in
Sections 25 & 26, T. 3 S. R. 6 E., recorded the eight day
of September, 1887.

The Idaho and Oregon Land
Improvement Company by
A. Alderson
President



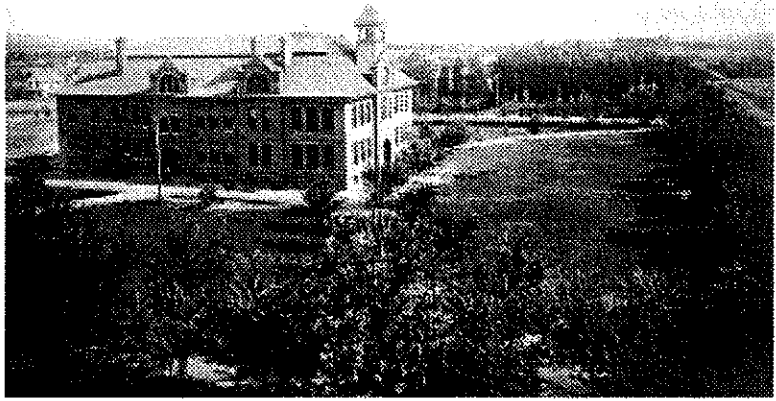
Sec. 26

Sec. 25

Notes
Streets 80 feet wide,
Hutchins St. 60 feet wide,
Alloys 16 feet wide,
Lots (W.R.R.) 25 x 120 feet
Blocks - 300 x 256 feet
Lots (W.R.R.) 100 x 120 feet
Blocks 300 x 120 feet.

1897 town site map.

Mountain Home published a booklet entitled "Mountain Home, The Garden Spot of Southern Idaho." Aimed at prospective homeseekers, the publication stressed "permanency of improvements and the prosperity of the inhabitants." Fine ranch and town homes were shown, as well as the newest downtown buildings. Featured were the new pressed brick Baptist Church and the Carnegie Library, both designed by J.E. Tourtellotte, architect of Idaho's new state capitol. Others pictured were the red



Central School built in 1904. Now the Middle School playground.

brick Congregational Church, finished in 1906; the Evans Hotel, built by W.J. Turner in 1900 (sold to Thomas Mellen in 1913); the lava rock headquarters of the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company; the First National Bank and Masonic Hall, and the Garrett Opera House block.

Other landmark buildings erected in the early years were St. James Episcopal Church in 1895; W.J. Turner's red barn in 1908; Bengoechea Hotel in 1910; Elmore County Courthouse in 1916 and the 1926 High School on the Triangle Property. W.J. Turner fired much of the local brick in his own brickyard. Turner was quite literally one of the founders and builders of Mountain Home.

The character of the town early in the century derived from a number of ingredients that are still important. Trees, grass, shrubs and flowers made the residential areas pleasant and livable. The pride of Mountain Home people was evident in the hours they spent planting lawns, gardens, and trees. Downtown streets were shaded by the Lombardy poplars planted in the 1880s as mere switches. They had grown with the town, and later had the company of elms, locusts, maples, oaks, and sycamores which would last longer and supply variety of texture and color.

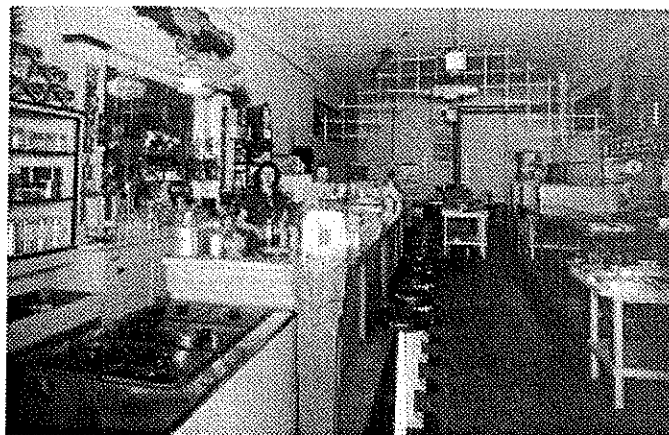


Street trees adjacent to sidewalk along Main Street. Railroad Park on left separated by wood rail fence.

Parks were established, too. One of the pleasant landscaped areas was Railroad Park, built by the railroad near the depot on Main Street. Carl Miller Park was built in 1919 in honor of a local boy killed in France in September 1918. The town issued bonds for \$10,000 to purchase land and develop this park, and established a park board. In 1921 a bandstand and rest rooms were built, and other developments followed. Carl Miller had been captain of Mountain Home's basketball team. The town's tribute of erecting a park in his memory reflected a love of sports as well as patriotism.

Certainly the most significant change in Mountain Home's traditional economy came in 1942 with the wartime establishment of Mountain Home Air Base. Completed and officially accepted on August 21, 1943, the base was used primarily during the war for training B-24 bomber crews. As many as 7000 men of the U.S. Army Air Corps were stationed at one time at the base 12 miles southwest of the town. Military personnel became a

familiar sight on the streets of Mountain Home during the war, and contributed much to the local economy. In 1944 the base was deactivated, but in 1948 was reopened and largely rebuilt with permanent brick buildings. It continues to be an important "neighbor city," closely linked to Mountain Home's present and future. It is significant that hundreds of Air Force men and their families have settled permanently in Elmore County after retirement from the service. They have come to love the lifestyle, clean air, and mountain scenery so readily accessible to the people of Mountain Home.



Soda fountain at Wilkin's Bakery.

In the beginning, Mountain Home had been a supply center for Elmore County's mining towns, but as Atlanta and Rocky Bar gradually dwindled in importance, farmers and ranchers became the chief customers. In 1907, the Idaho Fruit Land Company set out 1000 acres of apple trees, and for a few years thereafter horticulture was an important part of the area's economy. A peach orchard established earlier was producing 8000 boxes per year by 1907.

Mountain Home's location made it the shipping point for more than 1.25 million pounds of wool each year. The grazing area, of which Mountain Home was the center, was several thousand square miles in extent. Cattle and horses were also shipped in large numbers by 1900, and such famous women as Kitty Wilkens, the "Idaho Horse Queen," and Mary Moore, the "Idaho Cattle Queen," were a familiar sight on Alturas Street, now Main.

In 1900, Mountain Home had four general stores, three blacksmith shops, two livery stables, two millinery stores, two hotels, one drug store, one restaurant, one real estate office, and two meat markets, as well as a bank. The town's prosperity depended upon its railroad location, making it a shipping and receiving point for the farming and ranching empire of which it was the center.



Example of fixed wooden awnings on Main Street.

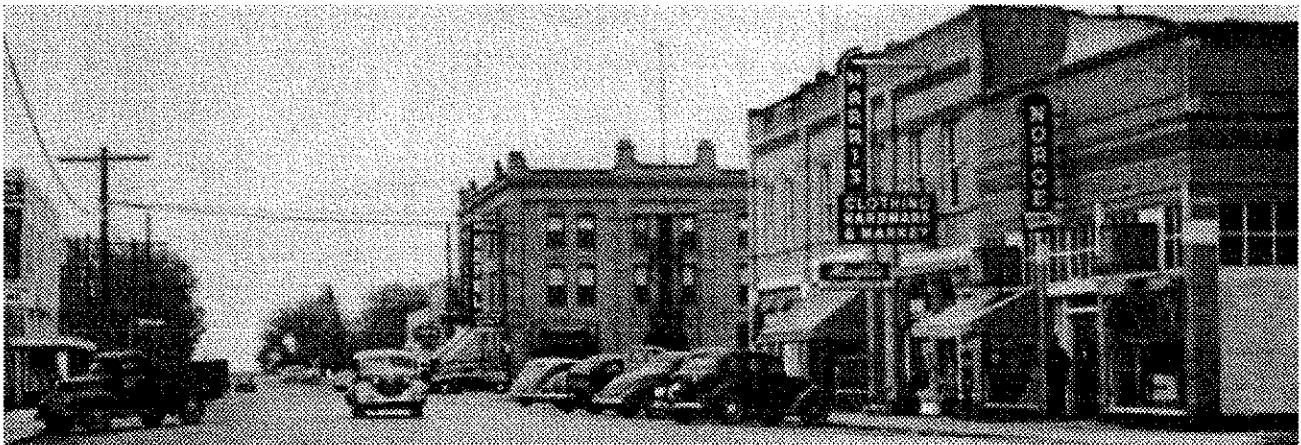
Agriculture in this arid region was impossible without water for irrigating. On June 17, 1892, Mountain Home celebrated the opening of a great reclamation project which would transform thousands of acres of sagebrush land into fertile farms and orchards. People came to Mountain Home from miles around to help commemorate the New Year in the town's development. The Boise contingent included the town band and W.E. Borah, a young attorney who was orator of the day. A parade of wagons and buggies a mile long drove three miles north of town to the new dam and reservoirs of the Elmore County Irrigation Co. Ltd. They were much impressed by the 60-foot high dam that had been built, with a center section of "impervious concrete." The procession drove across the top of the dam, viewed the reservoir, but fled back to town for the rest of the scheduled activities when a storm threatened. In the evening, there were fireworks and a "grand irrigation ball."



1940s photograph of Main Street. Notice two-way traffic and cast iron streetlights.

The Mountain Home reservoir was only part of the grand scheme planned by Chicago promoter A. W. Hager. He envisioned a series of five dams and reservoirs capable of watering the entire Mountain Home desert and supporting a population of “a million busy, happy people.” They dreamed big dreams in those days, and optimism was one of the virtues of good citizens—as well as an essential tool of promoters. Long Tom and Little Camas are other parts of Hager’s dream that eventually were built.

A major change came in 1972 when Interstate 84 opened northeast of the city. Prior to the interstate, cross-state traffic funneled through downtown Mountain Home. Downtown buildings lost over time include Central School built in 1904, the Congregational Church, across from the Episcopal Church, the old opera house and Briggs and Martin Hardware along Jackson Street, the Royal Hotel to make way for the fire station and the old ice house. Fire consumed the central portion of the McBrady-Eckstein Block and the Basque Hotel.



Jackson Street in the 1940s.

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