



**NORTH CENTRAL
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT**
1125 Oilfield Avenue
Shelby, MT 57474
Ph. (406) 434-9161 x112
(406) 434-2718
<http://www.northcentralrcd.org>

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS INDIAN

The **Museum of the Plains Indian** in Browning, Montana, holds artifacts and artworks from at least 20 northern Plains Native American tribes of the United States and Canada. Established in 1941 as a U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs facility, it is currently managed by the U. S. Department of the Interior's Indian Arts and Crafts Board. Clothing, artwork, games, and other artifacts from the early 20th century are displayed, with dioramas of pre-reservation life for these people. There is also a wonderful collection of 20th century-to-the-present day Native artwork. The **Friends of the Museum of the Plains Indian** is a 501(c)(3) organization and project of the North Central (MT) RC&D, Inc.

Since 2004 the Friends have worked to encourage tribal artists and craftspeople, support Museum artist exhibits and a visitor film, and maintain Congressional appropriations for this important program. The group generally helps the Museum function with minimal staffing and an aging but solid facility owned by the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs in the middle of the Blackfeet Reservation.



In 2007 the Friends held a workshop to vision the Museum in 2025, as well as a week-long educational program using Museum collections to help teach traditional games. In 2009 they funded a remastering of *Winds of Change*, the Museum's visitor film; and in 2010 they are facilitating an 80th anniversary Conference on Plains Indian Sign Language.

The Friends group, with strong support from the North Central RC&D, is able to carry out its program with strong partnerships with organizations such as the private Glacier Park, Inc.; Browning Area Chamber of Commerce; Montana Arts Council and Humanities Montana; Montana Historical Society;



Travel Montana; and a network of over 300 correspondents who regularly receive information about the Museum and provide support when needed. The Museum is a critical element in Blackfeet Reservation tourism, is adjacent to Glacier National Park, and is a stronghold of artifacts, stories, and memories for Indian people throughout the Northern Plains. The Friends, supported by the NCRC&D, are a significant resource in maintaining this



cultural treasure.