



ABOUT THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Secretary of State's mission is to improve services to Montana's voters, business community and government agencies through open communication, effective and efficient use of technology, and transparent accountability.

The Secretary of State is the only individual who has the lawful authority to affix the Great Seal of the State of Montana to public documents.



For permission to use the Great Seal of Montana, contact the Secretary of State at (406) 444-2034.

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Great Seal of the State of Montana pays tribute to our state's history, pristine beauty and agricultural and mining influences.

Its unique design is featured on our state flag and used to attest the authority of the Governor's signature on official government documents.



Thank you for expressing an interest in the Secretary of State's Office and this significant piece of Montana history. I invite you to learn more on our website at sos.mt.gov.

Montana Secretary of State

Linda McCulloch became Montana's Secretary of State in January 2009. She is the first woman and the 20th person to hold the office since statehood in 1889.



Follow Secretary Linda McCulloch on Twitter @ SOSMcCulloch

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THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF MONTANA



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ABOUT THE GREAT SEAL

The Great Seal of the State of Montana is a vivid symbol of all that is special about Big Sky Country.

Originally designed in 1865, the Great Seal features a plow and a miner's pick and shovel to illustrate the state's ample agricultural and mineral wealth.

Surrounding these tools are the mountains for which Montana was named and the Great Falls of the Missouri River. The natural beauty of these sites captivated early explorers Lewis and Clark in 1805.



“Oro y Plata”, the motto encrusted on the white ribbon, is Spanish for gold and silver - two of the riches that gave rise to Montana's nickname, the Treasure State.

Shortly after Montana became a state in 1889, Legislators debated the design of the seal at length and suggested adding American Indians, settlers, miners, horses, sheep, cattle, stars, a schoolhouse, and a train or stagecoach.

Recognizing that the seal could quickly become overpopulated, the lawmakers voted to leave much of the design intact.

They did vote, however, to change the word “Territory” to “State.”

This official change occurred in 1891, two years after Montana's statehood.



Original sketch for the proposed seal in 1865.

The original designers of the Great Seal were members of a legislative committee chaired by Francis M. Thompson, who engraved seals on the ends of ax handles for Montana's first mining districts.

The committee wanted to incorporate into the design essential elements of Montana's economy and natural resources.

The first seal included bison and other animals - which are not included on the original sketch - but these were removed by later designers who thought the seal was too cluttered.

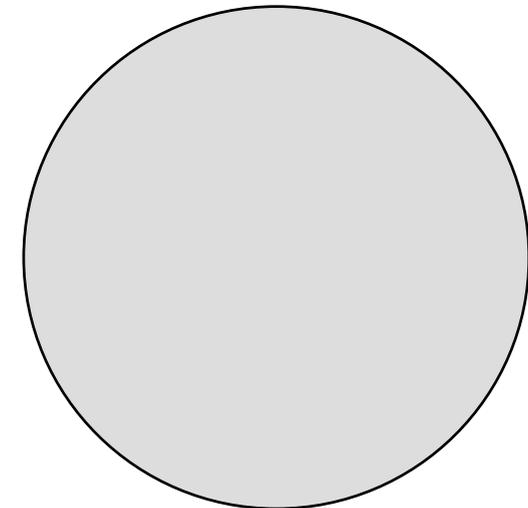
Over the years, the seal has changed considerably. Designers have added and removed trees, clouds and animals. The rising sun was changed into a setting sun, and then back again. At one point, someone even reversed the flow of the Missouri River!

KEEPING THE GREAT SEAL

Visitors to the State Capitol can request to affix the Great Seal of the State of Montana to this brochure using one of the Secretary of State's historical embossers.

Drop by the office anytime during regular office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon. - Fri.

My copy of the Great Seal of the State of Montana:



On _____, in Helena, Montana, I have hereunto subscribed my name and personally affixed the Great Seal of the State of Montana.

Sign Name

