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NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: David Purviance, director, The Core of Discovery: Exploring Lewis and Clark at UM, 243-4822; Scott Sproull, president, Western Bicentennial Committee, 721-4821.

LEWIS AND CLARK PLANNING MEETING COMING TO UM

MISSOULA—

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark couldn't have imagined the celebrations the United States is planning to commemorate the 2003-06 bicentennial of their epic trek. And now it's time for people in the Missoula area to decide how they want to observe this historic occasion and the expected influx of visitors.

The Missoula Area Lewis and Clark Coalition will host a planning meeting from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 2, in University Center Room 326 at The University of Montana. Coalition members are a loose network of people and organizations who feel it's time for a public discussion of how the community should participate in the bicentennial.

Other Montana communities along the Lewis and Clark trail already have started making bicentennial plans. Clint Blackwood, executive director of the Montana Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission, will start the Missoula meeting with a brief overview of what other communities are doing. Then there will be an open discussion about what the Missoula-area community wants to accomplish.

"I know we're asking a lot of you to give up a few hours on Saturday, but we face a truly unique opportunity as a community to plan one of the largest and most well-attended events in our history," said David Purviance, director of The Core of Discovery: Exploring Lewis and Clark at UM.

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Purviance said that Missoula was one of the most important points on the entire Lewis and Clark expedition, for it was at Travelers' Rest, in Missoula County, that the two explorers split up to take different routes on their return journey,

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