

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

FEB 12 1986  
MAR 14 1986

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Anaconda Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Anaconda Main Post Office

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

218 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Anaconda

STATE

Montana

NA VICINITY OF

CODE

30

NA

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

COUNTY

Deer Lodge

CODE

023

**2 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

Thematic  
Group

**OWNERSHIP**

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

NA

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

**PRESENT USE**

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service, Western Regional Headquarters

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

STATE

California

94099

NA VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Deer Lodge County Assessor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Anaconda

STATE

Montana

59711

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Engineering Record

DATE

1979

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Tri-County Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Anaconda

STATE

Montana

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Anaconda Main Post Office is a two story structure of reinforced concrete and structural steel construction. The building is a well-preserved, unaltered example of Neo-Classical design in the Greek mode. The raised basement wall is dressed with sandstone, and red brick faces the two story main section and flanking single story wings. Seven bays divide the facade of the building's central section which is dominated by four fluted columns of colossal order. The monumental columns with Ionic capitals front the recessed entry portico and support a full sandstone entablature with molded projecting cornice. A copper-clad hipped roof covers the central section.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Anaconda Post Office is two stories in height on a raised basement. The foundation and basement consist of concrete and brick. The first and second floors are framed with structural steel and the exterior is faced with red brick. Sandstone is used for exterior trim and granite for the main entry stairs. The roof consists of a copper-clad hipped portion and flat built-up tar composition portion.

The front facade (east) is symmetrical in elevation and classically proportioned. The facade consists of a two-story central salient flanked by single story wings. The central section projects slightly from the wings and is divided into seven equally spaced bays. The five central bays are recessed to form an entry portico. The wings each contain a single window bay. The raised basement wall is faced with sandstone (dressed) with a wide sandstone water table between the basement facing and first floor. Red brick faces the wings and corner bays of the central section. Six granite steps, extending the length of the entry portico and flanked by sandstone buttresses, provide access to the granite entry landing. Free-standing cast iron light standards with milk glass globes rest atop the buttresses.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number

7

Page 1

The entry portico is dominated by a colonnade of colossal order consisting of four fluted sandstone columns which rise from the entry landing to the top of the second story. The columns are topped by Ionic capitals and support a sandstone entablature which extends across the facade. The entablature is band of dentils, and projecting molded cornice. The columns front the recessed entry landing which is divided into five bays.

The exterior first and second floor walls of the entry portico are faced with dressed sandstone. The three centered entry bays consist of double steel doors with single glass panels in each (original doors of plate brass were replaced). Three-light transom windows fronted by ornate cast iron grilles are located above the doors. The door surrounds and door heads are also cast iron. This composition is ornately framed by carved sandstone.

The architrave consists of a flat molding ornamented by chaplet (bead) and simple water leaf molding. The flat entry arch of the center doors is topped by a pedimented frontispiece supported by scrolled brackets. Egg and dart molding lies in the dentil bands of the horizontal and raking cornices. The flanking entry bays consist of the same motif as the central entry bay, except that the arch is topped by a flat cornice. The flanking window bays consist of paired 4-over-4 light wooden sash windows topped by paired 2-light transom windows. A sandstone panel consisting of two sections is located beneath the sandstone sills.

The second story consists of five window bays aligned over the first floor bays. A sill course in a Vitruvian scroll motif marks the bottoms of the windows. These windows are identical to those of the first floor, except for the omission of the transom window.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 7

Page 2

The end bays of the central section consist of a single window in each bay on the first floor. The ends of the bay (outside corner and interior corner) are defined by flat sandstone pilasters which extend from the water table to the entablature topping the second story. The area between the pilasters is faced with red brick. The window bay consists of a single 4-over-4 double hung wooden sash window. The bay is framed in brick with a flat gauged brick arch and sandstone sill.

The flanking wings are a single story in height and faced with red brick. The corners are defined by rusticated sandstone. Molded sandstone cornices upon which rest solid brick and sandstone parapets terminate the walls. The single window bay in each wing consists of paired 4-over-4 light wooden sash windows topped by paired 2-light transom windows. The window bays are framed by flat gauged brick arches completed by sandstone keystones and sandstone sills. The central section is topped by a hipped copper clad roof which terminates behind the cornice. Flat built-up tar composition roofs top the flanking wings.

The side facades are faced with red brick and identical to each other. Three bays divide the first story of the wings and second story of the central portion. The treatment of the basement facing, water table, parapet, and entablature is identical to that described for the front facade. The window bays of the first floor bays are also identical except for the omission of the transom windows.

The rear facade is symmetrically arranged with three first floor window bays flanking each side of the rearward projecting loading vestibule and platform. The window bays are identical to the first floor windows of the side facades. The loading platform contains three double hinged doors overcovered by a projecting metal marquee. The exposed wall above the marquee is solid brick capped by a sandstone cornice.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 7

Page 3

Red brick with sandstone trim faces the walls. The second story (central section) is recessed from the first floor facade. The second story is brick and divided by five bays. Two windows identical to those of the second floor of the side facades flank each side and a bricked-in central bay. The sides of the loading vestibule each contain a single 6-over-6 light double hung wooden sash window. Flat gauged brick arches and sandstone sills frame the windows.

Interior materials consist of the following: basement: concrete floors, brick walls ("slum brick" or waste brick from the Anaconda smelter site), and concrete ceiling; first floor lobby: carpeted floor (over terrazzo and marble), plaster walls with 3-foot marble wainscotting and marble pilasters, and decorative plaster ceiling; postmaster's office: hardwood floors, plaster walls with 3-foot hardwood wainscotting, and plaster ceiling; work room: hardwood floors, plaster walls with 7-foot wood wainscotting, and plaster ceiling; swing room: same as work room; second floor offices and halls: terrazzo floors in halls and linoleum floors in offices, plaster walls and plaster ceilings; restrooms: terrazzo floors, plaster walls with 6-foot marble wainscotting, and plaster ceilings.



## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Sanborn Map, August 1891, sheet 6; June 1961, sheet 21.
2. Floor Plans 1931.
3. Vine, Bob. Anaconda Memories 1883-1983. Butte: Artcraft Printus 1983.
4. T. Allan Comp, Project Director, "Moung Along Main Street", 1979 Butte/Anaconda Rehab Action Team of the Historic American Engineering Record (No Date).
5. Historic American Engineering Record "U.S. Post Office", 1979. Construction Photos, May & November 1932.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.448 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	12	349160	5110000	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 7-12, Block 39, original townsite.  
 The site is rectangular and contains 150 feet of frontage along Main Street with a depth and frontage along Third Street of 130 feet.  
 Site Size = 19,500 sq. ft.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H. J. "Jim" Kolva

ORGANIZATION

Institute for Urban and Local Studies

DATE

September 1985

STREET & NUMBER

W. 705 1st Avenue

TELEPHONE

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Spokane

STATE

Washington

99204

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ NONE\_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*James T. Cole*

TITLE

Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE

02/06/86

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*See continuation sheet for listing*

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 8

Page 1

The Anaconda Post Office is also a key member in the city's group of magnificent public buildings including the original City Hall (1896), County Courthouse and Public Library. Its position on Main Street links it with the monumental Classically inspired Hearst Free Library (1898), located one block north, and the imposing Deer Lodge County Courthouse (1900) which anchors the north end of Main Street. Both buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Main Street corridor also contains several other fine buildings which represent Anaconda's history of community progress and commercial progress.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building represents a monumental symbol of the federal government and was the first federally constructed post office in Anaconda. The construction of the building represents many years of local lobbying efforts. The first attempt to procure a federal building in Anaconda came in January, 1915 when Representative Evans introduced a bill in the House for a \$125,000 appropriation. The onset of WWI and the nominal federal building program of the 1920s forestalled funding appropriation and construction until the early 1930s. Although the appropriations for the building which finally led to its construction preceded the onset of the Depression, the building symbolizes the federal government's effort to assist local communities during a period of national economic emergency. As a legacy of the Depression era public building programs of the federal government, the building is locally significant under Criterion A. It also represents the stability of the federal government as did the County Courthouse represent the county's wealth and the rustic city hall, the city's exuberant growth.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Anaconda, the county seat of Deer Lodge County, has an estimated population of 10,178 (1984). Anaconda holds a rich position in Montana history as the "Smelter



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 8

Page 2

City" and at one time was the location of the world's largest copper smelter. The Anaconda smokestack, completed in 1919, is the largest brick stack ever constructed. With the closure of the smelter in 1980, the local economy has stagnated. The present economy is based on a diversification of small business and industry which includes government, mining, manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism.

Anaconda was founded in 1883 by copper king Marcus Daly. In seeking a location for a copper smelter to process the ore mined in nearby Butte, Daly and Morgan Evans noted the beauty of the area and decided it would be the location for the smelter and the town for its employees. Daly commissioned Evans to purchase the lands necessary for his new enterprise. The plat was filed on June 25, 1883. The town was planned under the guidance of Daly to provide a neat and well planned layout for his workers.

During the period of the smelter's construction, workers either rode or walked to the Levensgood ranch, three miles west of present day Anaconda to collect their mail. The ranch had served as a post office and stage station since 1878 when Peter Levensgood was commissioned as postmaster.

As a result of the large influx of workers moving to the growing camp that became Anaconda, a post office was opened and Clinton H. Moore was appointed as postmaster on July 13, 1883. Moore, who is also credited with providing the name of Anaconda for the city, established a post office in the Frank Mahan drug store on October 25, 1883.

With the completion of the smelter, Anaconda began to grow rapidly with the influx of smelter workers, businessmen, tradespeople, and various other professional groups. By 1890 the population reached 3,975. The late 1880s and 1890s saw the development of

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number

8

Page 3

many of Anaconda's fine public and commercial buildings. During this period Marcus Daly backed his town of Anaconda against W.A. Clark, who backed Helena, in the bid for the state capitol. After a several million dollar war to influence votes, Helena won out. Anaconda continued to prosper and grow with populations of 9,450 in 1900, 10,134 in 1910, and 12,677 and 1920.

The Depression of the 1920s hit the copper industry, but Anaconda continued to grow, reaching its peak population of 13,487 in 1930. However, the Depression of the 1930s resulted in more severe impact and by 1940 the population decreased to 11,004. The years of the World War II era returned the city to a period of prosperity and a leveling of the economy.

The Anaconda Post Office is located on Main Street in the southern portion of the city's commercial district. Adjacent uses within the post office block include the famous Montana Hotel (1889) to the north, and various commercial uses to the west. Unfortunately, the Montana Hotel which was once listed on the National Historic Register has been truncated from its original four stories down to two stories (removed from Register). Across Main Street to the east are the B.P.O.E. Building (1914, three stories, brick) and the Anaconda Standard Building (1889, two stories, substantially altered). Diagonally across the Third Street intersection, the uses along Main Street include the present Anaconda Standard building (two-story brick) and the Washoe Theater (1931, Art Deco).

The block to the south of the post office across Third Avenue is used as the city park (donated to the city in 1906 by Anaconda Copper). Two other notable public buildings are located south of the post office along Main Street: the Hearst Free Library (1898, two-story, Grecian style, listed in National Historic Register), and the Deer Lodge County Courthouse (1900, three-story stone, listed in the National Historic Register). The

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 8

Page 4

Main Street corridor was identified in a pamphlet prepared by the 1979 Butte/Anaconda Rehab Action Team of the Historic American Engineering Record as having special historical interest and significance.

LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ANACONDA  
MAIN POST  
OFFICE

In the local context the construction of the Anaconda Post Office was reported in the Anaconda Standard. The first discussion of a new federal building/post office in Anaconda was reported in 1915. An article of January 4th reported that the city was in line for a federal building. During a visit with Representative John M. Evans in the fall of 1914, Postmaster Ed Burke suggested that Anaconda should have a federal building and stated that this city was certainly entitled to recognition in that way, in as much as other smaller cities in the state had been favored with public buildings. Representative Evans replied with surprise that "I had supposed all along that Anaconda did have a federal building." The article also indicated that it had published a special dispatch a few days before announcing that Evans had introduced a bill providing for a \$125,000 federal building in Anaconda.

However, it was not until 1930 that the prospect of Anaconda receiving a federal building appeared to be near. According to a June 23rd article, Congressman Evans wired Fred M. Davidson, chairman of the Anaconda democratic central committee, that an appropriations bill for \$150,000 had passed the house. Local businessmen expressed enthusiasm over the news. The Anaconda Kiwanis Club had devoted considerable time to the issuing of "propaganda toward this end".

Although the local citizens had hoped to immediate construction of the new building, construction did not

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 8

Page 5

commence until 1932. A site along Main Street that was occupied by the Leland Hotel was purchased for the new building. This building, formerly known as the Hotel Jennings, had been constructed around 1889. The John L. Soderberg Construction Company of Omaha began site work in April of 1932. By November 1st, the building was completed except for the interior work. Completion was expected in the spring of 1933.

On January 18, 1933, the Standard reported that the post office would be ready by the first of February. An article of January 20th announced that the new post office would open on January 30th. Postmaster Phil Daniels was readying his crew to prepare for the upcoming move. The new \$120,000 building was described as very impressive, and it was stated that it would add much to the business district. On January 28th, it was reported that the building would open for business the following Monday. The transfer would close the doors on another chapter in the history of the postal department in Anaconda.

An article of January 30th provided a narrative of Anaconda's postal history. Photos of the original post office at the Peter Levingood stage station and the new edifice were included. "Singled Shack to Marble Mansion" read the caption. "It is a long step from the first post office in this district in 1878 to the present architectural creation at Main and Third streets. It is a step from prairie grass to pavement, a step from hewed logs to marble, a step from a wooden well bucket to a frigidaire drinking fountain."

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 9

Page 1

5. Anaconda Standard, various articles 1930-1932.
6. "Anaconda is in Line for a Federal Home", Anaconda Standard,  
January 4, 1915.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Anaconda PO

Item number 10

Page 1

