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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Outlook Depot

other name/site number: Soo Line Depot 24SH775

2. Location

street & number: south of platted Block 10

not for publication: n/a  
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Outlook

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Sheridan code: 091

zip code: 59252

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maude Day MT SHPO 9-9-93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
   see continuation sheet

   determined eligible for the  
National Register

   see continuation sheet

   determined not eligible for the  
National Register

   see continuation sheet

   removed from the National Register

   see continuation sheet

   other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Debra Byers  
National

10/27/93

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### 5. Classification

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<b>Ownership of Property:</b> Private	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<b>Category of Property:</b> Buildings	Contributing	Noncontributing
<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:</b> 0	<u>  2  </u>	<u>    </u> building(s)
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
<b>Name of related multiple property listing:</b> Archaeological and Historic Resources of Sheridan County, Montana	<u>  2  </u>	<u>    </u> TOTAL

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### 6. Function or Use

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<b>Historic Functions:</b> Transportation: rail-related	<b>Current Functions:</b> Vacant/Not in use
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### 7. Description

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<b>Architectural Classification:</b> Other: Second Class Soo-Line Depot	<b>Materials:</b> foundation: wood walls: weatherboard roof: asphalt
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### Narrative Description

The Outlook Depot is a two-story, wood-frame building situated in the railroad right-of-way running along the south side of the platted townsite of Outlook, in northcentral Sheridan County, Montana. Outlook is a small (1990 population 109) community with an economy primarily dependent on wheat farming, and most of the treeless, rolling countryside surrounding the town is used for that purpose. The railroad line running east-west along the town's southern edge was constructed by the Minneapolis, St. Paul, & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad ("the Soo Line") in 1913; it is now operated by the Dakota, Missouri Valley & Western Railroad under lease. The depot is on the north side of the main railroad track, and is situated with its long axis parallel to the track. A siding south of the main track serves a series of large grain elevators placed along the south side of the right-of-way.

The depot building (Feature 1) is a standard-plan "second-class" Soo Line station building, intended to serve both the railroad's freight and passenger traffic at Outlook. The building is rectangular, approximately 48 feet long and 24 feet wide. The eastern end of the building (housing the passenger facilities and agent's quarters) is two stories high, while the western end (containing the freight room) is one story high.

The building is wood-framed with narrow clapboard siding. There is no apparent foundation; rather, the building rests on a series of vertical wood posts. The building's gable roof is currently covered with red asphalt shingles (wood shingles were probably original). There are regularly-spaced decorative curved-edge wood brackets beneath the boxed eaves. All fenestration is wood-framed. Windows on the first story, and on the west end of the second story, are four-over-four double-hung; the remaining second-story windows are two-over-two double-hung. Wood-frame storm windows remain. The two entry doors (one each on the north and south walls) are paneled wood beneath fixed transom lights. A roughly-built non-historic wooden vestibule has been added around the north entry door. The freight room has two large wooden service doors (also beneath transoms), but no other fenestration. Facing the track in the east half of the building is a

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small, rectangular bay, almost fully windowed; the agent's telegraph desk is located behind this bay. A sheet-metal train order board is suspended from a bracket on the bay.

The building is painted yellow with brown trim. A small stenciled notice on the south wall reads "PAINTED 1948." The building's original station signs are missing; a replacement on the west wall is recent and not of railroad pattern. A station platform consisting of heavy timbers exists between the building and the track to the south. The current platform is not original; a larger wooden platform existed at the same location earlier.

The building's interior includes a passenger waiting room at the east end, the agent's office near the center, and a freight room to the west. The entire second floor is occupied by a small, four-room apartment intended for the agent and his family. The office includes the windowed bay, which offered a clear view in both directions along the track. The stairs to the second floor are at the back of the office. The waiting room and office have a wood floor, beaded board wainscotting, horizontal beaded board siding above the wainscotting, and beaded board ceiling. The historic ticket window remains.

The station privy (Feature 2) is located west of the depot. It is a small rectangular structure with two compartments. The gable roof has asphalt shingles. The privy has clapboard siding and a four-panel door for each two-holer compartment. There is no foundation. The privy is painted to match the depot building.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C	Areas of Significance: Transportation Architecture
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a	Period(s) of Significance: ca.1913 - 1943
Significant Person(s): n/a	Significant Dates: ca.1913
Cultural Affiliation: n/a	Architect/Builder: unknown

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The Outlook Depot is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criteria A and C. The building is historically significant as the local base of operations for the Soo Line Railroad. The railroad was perhaps the single most important influence in the early development of Outlook and the surrounding rural area. The railroad was responsible for platting the Outlook townsite, and its promotional activities encouraged settlement in the region. Once the settlers did arrive, they found the railroad to be the primary means of both transportation and communication in the area. Both passenger and freight traffic traveled to and from Outlook almost exclusively by rail during the region's early years, and the telegraph housed at the station was an important early means of communication. All these activities centered around the depot building, making it an unofficial community center until motor vehicles began supplanting the railroad later in the century.

Architecturally, the Outlook depot is a well-preserved, typical example of a Soo Line combination freight and passenger station. It is one of hundreds that the railroad built as it extended lines across the northern Great Plains between the 1880s and 1910s. The building plan used for the Outlook station was utilitarian but efficient, combining the needed freight, passenger, office, and residential functions under a single roof. This design was well-suited for the many small Great Plains towns served by the Soo, and the railroad constructed dozens of station buildings using these standard plans. Most, if not all, of the Soo Line towns in Sheridan County boasted stations of this design, but only the Outlook station survives at its original site. The building is further distinguished by its unusually high level of design integrity, and by the fact that it retains both a train-order board and wooden station platform. It is one of the best-preserved small-town railroad stations in Montana.

### Historical Information

Beginning in the 1880s and continuing until the 1910s, the Minneapolis, St. Paul, & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad underwent a significant period of expansion in the northern Great Plains. Much of this new trackage was constructed in North Dakota, but the railroad also had plans to continue westward into Montana and perhaps beyond. Although the Soo surveyed several potential routes into Montana, its first actual construction in the state did not occur until 1913, when the railroad extended a branch line into the extreme northeastern corner of the state, from Ambrose, North Dakota to Whitetail, Montana. The line served a newly-settled and rapidly-growing agricultural region; the Soo encouraged this growth by platting several townsites along its new line and by advertising the area to prospective homesteaders. The Whitetail branch was destined to be the Soo's only trackage in Montana; further expansion was stifled by the presence of the competing Great Northern Railway, and by the collapse of the homestead boom following World War I.

Outlook was one of the townsites platted by the Soo as part of its 1913 expansion into Montana. From the beginning, the community was among the more successful of the Soo's Montana towns, and the railroad sidings at Outlook quickly became a local center for grain shipment. The construction date of the Outlook depot building is undocumented, although the building was probably erected in 1913 or soon after; it was common for railroad companies to construct stations and other ancillary features immediately after the completion of the accompanying trackwork. Once completed, the building served both as home and workplace for a local "agent" employed by the railroad; the agent arranged for the rail shipment

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of goods to and from Outlook, sold tickets for the Soo's daily passenger train, and handled a variety of other administrative chores. The agent also served as the local telegraph operator, relaying both railroad and non-railroad messages.

The depot continued to function in this way for decades, although automobiles and trucks began to siphon away much of the railroad's traffic beginning in the 1920s. The Soo ended passenger and mail service to the area in the mid-1950s, and by the 1960s locally-produced wheat was virtually the only commodity locally carried by rail. The decline in traffic reduced the need for small-town stations such as at Outlook, and by the 1980s none of the Soo's Montana depots remained in operation. Large amounts of wheat, however, continue to be shipped from Outlook by rail.

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

- Grant, H. Roger. The Country Railroad Station in America. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).  
Minneapolis, St. Paul, & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad Company. Railroad property plat map for the townsite of Outlook, Montana. Original located in the files of the Montana Highway Department, Helena.
- Vyzralek, Frank E., H. Roger Grant and Charles Bohi. "North Dakota Railroad Depots: Standardization of the Soo Line," North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains 42 (1975).

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:   **Zone**   **Easting**   **Northing**  
                  A   13       516350   5414550

Legal Location: Section 9, 36N, 53E

### Verbal Boundary Description

The point of beginning is on the northern edge of the main track of the Soo Line's Whitetail branch, at a point directly south of the western edge of Marr street in the townsite of Outlook. The boundary proceeds eastward along the northern edge of the track approximately 220 feet to a point directly south of the western edge of the north-south alley in Block 10, Outlook. It then proceeds north 50 feet, west approximately 220 feet, and south 50 feet to the point of beginning. The nominated property is located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 9, T36N, R53E, M.P.M.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the two nominated buildings, the immediate surrounding area, and the station platform. It intentionally excludes unrelated features to the north, east, and west in Outlook townsite. The railroad line itself, a linear feature of undetermined significance, is also excluded.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mark Hufstetler, Historian  
organization: Renewable Technologies, Inc.                      date: September 1, 1992  
street & number: 511 Metals Bank Building                      telephone: 406/782-0494  
city or town: Butte    state: MT                      zip code: 59701

## Property Owner

name/title: Soo Line Railroad  
street & number: Soo Line Building  
city or town: Minneapolis    state: MN                      zip code: 55440

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Additional Documentation/Photos

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### Index to Photographs

Photographer: Mary McCormick  
Date: August 1991

<u>Photo Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Direction Facing</u>
1	Depot (Feature #1): East and south sides	Northwest
2	Depot: south elevation	North
3	Depot: looking east along south elevation at trackside	East
4	Depot: North and east sides	South-southwest
5	Depot: detail of train order board	North-northeast
6	Privy (Feature #2): south and east sides	North-northwest