

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: Yucca Theatre

other name/site number: State Senator Dave M. Manning Residence  
24TE

2. Location

street & number: 520 Division & Elliott

not for publication: n/a  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

city/town: Hysham

state: Montana code: MT county: Treasure code: 103 zip code: 59038

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 X statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maudie Slafy Montana SHPO 11-16-93  
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:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	<u>for</u> Signature of the Keeper <u>Shawn Lapsley</u>	Entered in the National Register Date of Action <u>1/7/94</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

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### 5. Classification

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<b>Ownership of Property:</b> Public-local	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<b>Category of Property:</b> Building	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<b>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:</b> 0	<u>  2  </u>	<u>      </u> building(s)
<b>Name of related multiple property listing:</b> n/a	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
	<u>  2  </u>	<u>      </u> TOTAL

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### 6. Function or Use

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**Historic Functions:**  
RECREATION & CULTURE: theater  
DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**Current Functions:**  
RECREATION & CULTURE: museum

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### 7. Description

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**Architectural Classification:**  
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Mission style

**Materials:**  
foundation: concrete  
walls: stucco  
roof: asphalt  
other: n/a

### Narrative Description

#### Physical Description

The Yucca Theatre is a two story building of brick construction with a stuccoed exterior. Built in 1931 in the Mission style, the building is arranged in a rectangular plan, with large battered towers which frame the front entrance. The large towers, buttressed walls, vega ends and typical stucco finish are all characteristic of the Mission style.

The south elevation is the primary facade. The entrance is centered and recessed between the towers, with a series of French doors and transoms on the first floor, set beneath a balcony with simple wooden rail. Originally, the entrance and a ticket window were sheltered beneath the balcony behind three sets of French doors with multipaned transoms. This outer set of doors and glazing were removed during repair work completed in 1987.

The ticket window is located centrally in the space below the balcony. It is an octagonal bay with solid stucco panels below three panels of glass. A pediment with four projecting vega ends caps the bay. A pair of French doors under four paned transoms is set to either side of the ticket window; these were originally a second set of inner entry doors. Framed windows for displaying theater posters are set into the tower walls facing into this entry area.

On the second story, a series of recessed rectangular panels lines the wall behind the balcony, giving an arcaded effect to the facade. The rectangular panelled motif is repeated on the front of each tower, where tall narrow panels are inset above paired projecting vega ends. The towers terminate in four square units, each crowned with a gently peaked polygonal dome. A curvilinear pedimented cornice spans the space between the towers. The pediment is visually supported by curved knee braces and features a framed rectangular panel above an inset rectangular decorative panel. Vega ends originally projected from each of the square units capping the towers. In 1987, due to a misunderstanding with a contractor making repairs to the building, the vegas were not replaced after their removal.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Yucca Theatre

Page 1

On the east and west elevations, the design of the original theater building is similar. These facades present long, expansive stuccoed walls which were originally relieved across the top by a series of projecting gable ends and two buttresses placed midway and toward the rear. At the front and the rear, false parapet walls step gently down, emphasizing the towers and corners of the original massing.

Original windows are positioned at the base of the tower, where a pair of multipaned fixed windows are located. On the second story, 4-over-4 sash windows open just rear of the tower. A single such unit is located on the west wall; the east wall includes a pair of these windows. Additional window openings are located toward the rear of the original theater; they appear to have been added in 1936-1937 when the conversion to living space was made. These non-original windows include casement, sash and fixed windows.

At the rear of the original theater, behind the movie screen, alterations occurred in 1936-37. The stage was eliminated and Manning added living accommodations for his family. These 1936-1937 alterations consisted of a two story addition to accommodate two bedrooms, kitchen, dining room and bathroom spaces. Windows were cut into the original walls and the exterior of the addition was sheathed with narrow lapped wooden siding.

In 1950, two single story additions were made, wrapping the northeast and northwest corners, creating new living room and family room space. These new walls were clad with wider dimension clapboard; the roof is a barely sloped hip design, covered with rolled asphalt. Large picture windows were set into the walls of the room on the northwest corner; casement windows divided into four horizontal panes illuminate the room on the northeast corner. An oversized, exterior red brick fireplace chimney is attached at the northwest corner. Two open, poured concrete patios were created on the north side and northwest corner at the same time. In 1974, shed awnings supported by wrought iron posts were added to cover each patio. The awning roofs are covered with corrugated fiberglass; this material now partially encloses the north patio as well.

The entire interior was originally devoted to theater space, with a projection booth and stepped balcony built into the south end and the screen located on the north. Currently the south end of the theater retains much of the original design and furnishings. Fixed, wooden theater seats are still in place; interior walls are sealed with a burnished gold finish acoustical plaster; original brass light fixtures are mounted on the lobby walls. The space beneath the balcony contains the original green carpet and theater seats which are featured in tours given by the museum.

In 1972, the theater interior was shortened, the north end was walled off to expand the residential quarters. The interior of the residence reflects its mid-20th century vintage in the spatial arrangements, interior fixtures and trim.

The Yucca Theatre sits on a deep corner lot on Hysham's main street. At the rear of the property, a small single story guest house was constructed ca. 1940. The guest house was designed to complement the architecture of the theater and is finished with stucco. It was planned to house a 2-car garage on one end and a domestic space broken into three open rooms. The interior includes space for kitchen, living room, dining, sleeping and a bath. Beds and other furnishings are built in and the walls are finished with knotty pine paneling.

### Integrity

Integrity of the theater is highly preserved, representing very well the Mission style architecture and evoking a strong sense of the period of significance for the property. The building remained almost perfectly intact on the exterior primary facades until repairs were made during 1987. Most noticeably, the removal of the outer wall of the main entrance and the removal of the vega ends have resulted in a loss of integrity. The vega removal resulted in an unfortunate loss of richness

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Yucca Theatre

Page 2

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and texture, simplifying the exterior rhythms of the building. However, replacement of the vegas is planned, all other elements of the design are well represented, and the building most certainly conveys its historic design intent and function.

The greatest impact to the original design of the theater is to be found at the north end. Here alterations to create residential space changed the design in 1936-1937, 1950, 1972 and 1985; as a result the original design of the north portion of the building is no longer evident. Those changes made in 1936-1937 occurred during the period of significance and contribute to the property's significance, but a measure of integrity was lost in subsequent modifications, the most noticeable being on the interior in 1972 when the screen was eliminated and the theater shortened. Fortunately, the 1931 balcony and south portion remain to represent the simple historic interior with original seating, cement flooring, green plush carpet, and plastered wall treatment, illustrating clearly the historic design and use of the theater.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, B, C      Areas of Significance: Politics/Government  
Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):      Period(s) of Significance: 1931-1943

Significant Person(s): Manning, David M.      Significant Dates: 1931, 1936-1937

Cultural Affiliation: n/a      Architect/Builder: Dave and Jim Manning

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The Yucca Theatre is a significant Montana building, qualifying for the National Register under Criterion A for associations with growth in Hysham during the early 20th century and for associations with the growth of motion picture entertainment from silent films to modern cinema. The Yucca Theatre gains significance for the National Register under Criterion B for associations with David M. Manning, a state senator whose lasting impact on Montana's political system contributed to the development of the state during the 20th century, especially efforts at rural electrification and highway construction. Finally, the Yucca Theatre qualifies under Criterion C as an excellent example of Mission style architecture in Montana, reflecting the grandiose style and flamboyant design of movie theaters during the 1930s, when the popularity of movies was at its peak.

### Historical Significance

In 1901, the Northern Pacific Railroad built a siding between Billings and Forsyth to drop off supplies for Charlie J. Hysham who was associated with the Flying E Ranch, one of the biggest in the area. At this time, the ranch and the Hysham siding were located on the Crow Indian Reservation, but in 1906 the U.S. Government moved the boundaries of the reservation to their present day location.<sup>1</sup> The boundary change expanded the land available for settlers, and the Hysham area continued to attract homesteaders and grow. In 1908 the pioneers built a school, and Ada Channel platted the original townsite of Hysham. Because of the population increases, the Northern Pacific built a small depot in 1912. In 1919, Hysham was declared the county seat, and a grain elevator was built. Also by 1919, residents of the town enjoyed the benefits of sewer and water systems, sidewalks, and electricity.<sup>2</sup>

After World War I, widespread post-war depression hit Hysham. Grain prices plummeted as Europe started to grow its own food again, and the federal government removed price controls for grain. The weather changed, from rare abundant rainy years, back to the normal drier climate, and brought drought. Faced with these hardships, many homesteaders left the area because they could no longer provide for their families on the farms.<sup>3</sup> Although hard hit by these events during the late 1910s and the early 1920s, Hysham slowly recovered from these difficult times and continued to grow.

See continuation sheet

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<sup>1</sup>Kimball, Ray. "Tales of Treasure County. Historical Essays by Residents of Treasure County, Montana." Ruth Carrington, Ed. Treasure County Bicentennial Commission. 1976. pp. 21.

<sup>2</sup>ibid. pp. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Malone, Michael P., Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang. "Montana. A History of Two Centuries." University of Washington Press. Seattle and London. 1991. pp. 280-283.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Yucca Theatre

Page 1

During the 1920s, Hysham established itself and expanded its crop base to corn, sugar beets, and alfalfa. Some farmers continued to grow wheat and raise sheep.

The Yucca Theatre represents this period of growth and the high hopes the residents of Hysham had for their small town. Local citizens praised David M. Manning for building the theater, demonstrating the faith he had in the longevity of the town.<sup>4</sup> Even through the Great Depression Manning's faith proved to be well-placed as Hysham continued to develop, albeit not very quickly. Through the decades that followed, the Yucca Theatre maintained its longevity; Manning and family continued to show movies until the mid-1960s.<sup>5</sup>

The Yucca Theatre gains significance for the National Register under Criterion B, because of its important associations with David M. Manning, a hometown celebrity and practical politician, whose illustrious career in Montana politics lasted through much of the 20th century. The theater served as Manning's residence throughout his tenure.

Manning was born on 28 February 1897 in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, and his family moved to Hysham in 1910.<sup>6</sup> He attended the University of Montana and majored in Pre-Law. Manning married Ruth Anne Clark in 1920, and they had three children, one son and two daughters. His son, David J. Manning, died in Belgium at the Battle of the Bulge during World War II, and his daughters--Shirley Mary Manning Mouat and Vivian Ruth Manning LaSalle--are still alive.<sup>7</sup>

During his lifetime, Manning owned all or part of five different businesses. Manning was a legislator, contractor, business owner, and inventor. He not only gave of his time and energy as a state representative and businessman, but he also devoted much of his time to community work. He helped build the city swimming pool, the city water system, and the Catholic Church. He also built two dams in the Hysham area and developed and improved irrigation systems.<sup>8</sup> During the 1920s, in addition to working construction by day, Manning worked nights loading sugar beets into railroad cars. The Manning brothers, Dave and Jim, designed a machine that loaded the beets with a hydraulic scoop that was attached to an F-20 tractor, equipped with artificial light. The scoop picked the beets up and loaded them into the trucks, far more easily than loading the beets by hand.<sup>9</sup> In 1921 he worked for a construction company in the southwest for almost five years, being exposed no doubt to the Mission style during that period. He returned to Montana in 1925 to start his own construction company.<sup>10</sup>

David M. Manning and his brother Jim owned the first silent picture house in Hysham called the "Idle Hour." They later designed and built the Yucca Theatre, a state-of-the-art talking picture theater with a stage for plays, which opened in 1931. The theater was designed in the Mission style similar to a building Manning had seen while working in the

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<sup>4</sup>The Hysham Echo. Hysham, Montana. 12 March 1931.

<sup>5</sup>The Hysham Echo. Hysham, Montana. 29 March 1991.

<sup>6</sup>Kimball. pp. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Mouat, Shirley Manning. "David Martin Manning." Undated.

<sup>8</sup>Mouat, Shirley Manning. "National Register of Historic Places Workbook. Unpublished on file at the Montana SHPO. pp. 17.

<sup>9</sup>Kimball. pp. 166.

<sup>10</sup>Carrington. pp. 189.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Yucca Theatre

Page 2

southwest.<sup>11</sup> The inside was luxurious, and the projection equipment was the best of its kind for the day.<sup>12</sup> The Mannings changed the theater in 1936 and constructed an addition on the rear which served as their family home until 1989. However, the theater remained open until the mid-1960s when the Mannings' other business interests and the legislature made managing the theater difficult.<sup>13</sup>

Manning played an important role in the politics of Montana. He ran for the House of Representatives in 1932 and for the Senate in 1940. When he retired in 1985, Manning was the longest running state senator in the country. During his 53-year tenure in the legislature, Manning served under eleven governors and met all of the U.S. presidents from Roosevelt to Reagan. He held the positions of Speaker of the House, Minority and Majority Floor Leader, and Dean of the Senate. In 1963 between sessions, Manning was appointed as President Pro Tempore. This position, normally a token of respect, gave him an opportunity to serve as Lieutenant Governor because the position was vacant at the time.<sup>14</sup> In November 1963, rumors flew that Manning might run for governor. It was believed that he would win the race if it were held at that time, and the Republicans in his district were excited to try to win his senate seat back. Ultimately, Manning chose not to give up his legislative position and did not run for governor.<sup>15</sup>

While in the legislature, Dave Manning gained a reputation as a fair and patient man. Nicknamed "The Fox" for his ability to offer solutions to problems, he was often able to cross political party lines when others could not. Often called upon to reconcile conflicts between the Democratic and Republican parties, Manning always made time to listen to anyone's concerns, problems, or opinions, and people from both parties respected him.

During his long tenure in the legislature, Manning championed the cause of rural electrification, helping mold the rural landscape and improve the home life of the residents. Manning traveled to Washington D.C. three times at his own expense to lobby Congress to approve funds to install electricity in Montana's remote areas during the REA expansion. Manning's persistence paid off in 1937, when his construction company set the first rural electric pole in eastern Montana,<sup>16</sup> and his determination is credited for Montana's rural areas receiving electricity many years ahead of schedule.

Manning also designed and patented three machines specifically for the installation of electric poles during the REA era. Of the three machines, the "cushioned" boring machine was used the most. The device was able to dig holes for poles in any type of terrain, and it was much better than the earlier boring models that broke down in the harder or rockier ground. The second was an "A" frame that was mounted on the back of a Caterpillar tractor that planted the poles in the holes. To put the transmitters on the pole, Manning designed a third machine, similar to today's cherry picker, which raised a lift to the top of the pole.<sup>17</sup> These innovative machines saved time, energy, and money when the electric lines were installed.

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<sup>11</sup>Carrington. pp. 189.

<sup>12</sup>The Hysham Echo. Hysham, Montana. 12 March and 6 June 1931.

<sup>13</sup>The Hysham Echo. 29 March 1991.

<sup>14</sup>The Missoulian. Missoula, Montana. 4 March 1963.

<sup>15</sup>Mooney. Thomas E. "For Governor. Will Manning Run?" The Billings Gazette. 3 November 1963.

<sup>16</sup>Erickson. pp. 8; and The Hysham Echo. 29 March 1991.

<sup>17</sup>Erickson. pp 13-14.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Yucca Theatre

Page 3

Manning also worked to provide good roads and highways in Montana to connect the vast expanse of the state and "to get Montana out of the mud."<sup>18</sup> Honoring five decades of service on the State Committee on Highways and Transportation, the Montana Department of Transportation named its headquarters for Manning because his impact and promotion for the construction of the highway system was so great.<sup>19</sup> Another honor Manning received was the Distinguished Colleague Award at Montana State University in recognition of his major engineering and construction role in the development of Montana's streets and highways.<sup>20</sup>

Manning took one of the biggest political stands of his career against the U.S. Supreme Court's 1964 ruling to reapportion bicameral state legislatures. The Court ruled that both state houses must be apportioned by population to create a "one man one vote" balance. Until that time many state legislatures were patterned after the federal government. In Montana this "little federal" system favored rural counties; each county held one State Senate and one State House seat, additional House seats were then delegated to reflect populations. Manning's sparsely populated district covered a large geographical area and someone joked that Manning had more cows to represent than people in his district. Manning replied that he did indeed represent cows, along with acres, trees, coal, and a lifestyle.<sup>21</sup> Two years after the judgment, the court ruled the decision was not as just as it first thought, and the law was moderately relaxed. Manning was pleased with the conclusion, but he always regarded the law as unfair because the urban counties would have more power than the rural counties. After Montana's reapportionment plan was approved, Manning's district encompassed all or parts of five counties, (Treasure, Garfield, Dawson, McCone and Rosebud), and it was the largest geographical district, (14,000 square miles), in the state.<sup>22</sup> Manning made sure he still represented all of the people in his territory and drove thousands of miles to meet with them.<sup>23</sup>

Manning remained a leader of vision throughout his political career. During the fuel shortages of the 1970s, he proposed preservation of fossil fuels and Montana's most precious resource--water, which he called "white oil." He envisioned creating a long-term hydroelectric system that would cut into the banks of the Yellowstone, trap the spring flood waters, and store them in a buried conduit, using the force of gravity to release the water throughout the year. This system would generate electricity, and the water would be returned to the flow without building a dam across the river and inundating the "precious farmlands" of Montana.<sup>24</sup> Further concerned that Montanans would not protect their precious water resources and would lose claims to other states, Manning asserted that since the headwaters originated in Montana, the state should claim the water rights before another state would try to possess them. He tried to persuade Montana to take

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<sup>18</sup>Senate Joint Resolution No. 25. Montana State Library. 25 April 1985.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Unsworth, Dennis J. Letter to Mrs. William Mouat. 5 December 1991.

<sup>21</sup>Johnson, Charles S. "Record-Setting Legislator Dies at 90." The Great Falls Tribune. Great Falls, Montana. 14 March 1990.

<sup>22</sup>Sundby, Jill. "Museum Given Manning Home." The Billings Gazette. 24 November 1991; and The Great Falls Tribune. Great Falls, Montana. 14 March 1990.

<sup>23</sup>"50 Years a Statesman." Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. pp. 12. Undated.

<sup>24</sup>"50 Years a Statesman." Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Undated.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Yucca Theatre

Page 4

the lead in the nation's development of water power and to think of and use water as a renewable power resource. Manning wanted to advance Montana into a "future beyond the dead end road we are traveling on, the ash of finite fuel."<sup>25</sup>

Dave M. Manning's long tenure in the state legislature during some of Montana's most difficult times proved his tenacity and courage to confront situations that were not always easy to resolve. Known for his optimistic, cheerful nature and wonderful sense of humor, Manning cared about the people and the lifestyle of Montana. Although he promoted Montana's capability to keep up and compete with other states, he worked to protect the way of life and the resources of Montana.

### Architectural Significance

The Yucca Theatre qualifies under Criterion C, reflecting Manning's knowledge of and expertise in building in the early 20th century styles of the southwestern United States. Retaining the distinct Mission architectural style in which it was built, the theater is an excellent late example of the Mission style and a landmark in Hysham, proudly displaying large battered towers, buttressed walls, and vega ends that boldly illustrate the style.

Clad with a typical creamy stucco finish, the theater is enriched by many details common to Mission architecture: the towers, which are crowned with gently peaked polygonal domes that give the theater a fort-like appearance; the curvilinear pedimented cornice connecting the towers and supporting curved knee braces; the French entry doors into the theater; the curvilinear cornice with vega ends crowning the ticket window in the recessed entryway; and the balcony above the ticket window lending an arcaded effect to the theater entrance.

A local museum since 1992, the Yucca Theatre continues to reflect its links to Hysham's early development and now commemorates the theater's long history and the career of Dave Manning--his contributions and devotion to Montana's rural communities. Manning initiated many changes to the rural landscapes and towns--electricity, paved roads, dams, and irrigations systems, while preserving the rugged and simple lifestyle of eastern Montana.

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<sup>25</sup>Bowler, Duane W. The Billings Gazette. Billings, Montana. Undated, and Manning Dave. "Montana's Water Use. Our States Highest Priority of the 80's. The White Oil We Lose to the Sea."

Yucca Theatre  
Name of Property

Treasure County, Montana  
County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

### 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	5128800	328020
B	13	5128800	328000
C	13	5128750	328800
D	13	5128750	328020

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): T6N R36E Section 9

### Verbal Boundary Description

The Yucca Theatre property covers lots 1, 2 and 3 of block 1 of the Original Townsite and lot 4, block 15 of the Jacobs Brothers Addition of Hysham, Treasure County, Montana.

### Boundary Justification

The historic property boundaries of the Yucca Theatre are those associated with the theater throughout its history.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Carol J. Zottnick  
organization: Montana State Historic Preservation Office      date: July 1993  
street & number: 1410 8th Avenue      telephone: 444-7715  
city or town: Helena      state: MT      zip code: 59620

### Property Owner

name/title: Treasure County 89ers, Inc., c/o President, Sylvia Lyndes  
street & number:  
city or town: Hysham      state: MT      zip code: 59038

name/title: Shirley Mouat (owner of guest house)  
street & number: 825 Parkhill Dr.  
city or town: Billings      state: MT      zip code: 59102

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

Yucca Theatre

Page 1

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