



Picture by Pat Hansen

## “National 4-H Event Comes to Deer Lodge”

By Pat Hansen

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4-H members and their families from across the country are convening in Deer Lodge for the 2018 National 4-H Western Heritage Conference and Championship Shoot July 31-Aug. 3.

Todd Kesner, director of the Montana 4-H Center at Montana State University said the 4-H Western Heritage Project combined a comprehensive study of the Old West with the fastest growing shooting-sports discipline in the world – western action shooting. The project provides an opportunity for 4-h members and adult leaders to experience the lifestyles and cultures of the Old West from 1860-1900 through a living history approach to learning while instilling the concepts of gun safety and personal responsibility. The experience is enhanced with the use of historically accurate firearms, clothing and accessories.

Competition and other activities begin Tuesday morning at St. Mary’s Center with 80 4-H members, ages 9-19 representing 10 states from Alabama to Washington and California to Montana. Dressed in clothing of the frontier era they

will be divided into posses to participate in a historical scavenger hunt around town that includes doing a frontier activity.

In the afternoon they will go to the shooting range for Buffalo rifle shooting and will end the day taking a history exam.

Wednesday and Thursday shooting competition begins at 9 a.m. at the Powell County Shooting Range, at the former Mastodon Plant located on Lake Hill Road southwest of town. 4-H members will be shooting authentic replicas of firearms from eight stations with false fronts that represent frontier town. The public is invited to watch.

Wednesday and Thursday afternoons are dedicated to workshops at the Old Montana Prison and Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site; and interviews where each member will portray a historic character and tell his/her story to the judges. Kesner said the judges often state they learn a lot of history they didn't know from the young people's stories.

"As they do research, the kids learn about the accomplishments and importance of both men and women from a variety of cultures and races that contributed to the history of the Old West," Kesner said.

Thursday evening at the banquet and awards program Dr. Quintard Taylor, professor emeritus, University of Washington is the featured speaker. Taylor is considered the premier scholar of African Americans in the American West, 1582-1990.

The day will conclude with participants going on a Territorial Prison Ghost Tour.