

**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT, FY2009
LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT**



“Sunrise over Battle Ridge/Indian Memorial & Last Stand Hill” - John A. Doerner, NPS-LIBI

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January 2009 at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument marked the beginning of Kate Hammond's first year as superintendent; James Charles was Acting Superintendent for the first part of the fiscal year from October 1, 2008 until mid-January, 2009. The primary goals for the year included: Enhancement of interpretation and ensuring a balanced story is told; reviewing our Cultural Resource and Museum Programs to ensure compliance with NPS policies and develop priorities to focus our work; improving relationships with park stakeholders and cooperators; and increasing communication and dialogue with historically associated tribes.

Visitation –After a downward trend over the past 6 years, visitation appears to be on the increase again. Visitation in calendar year 2009 was 302,811 a 7.30% increase as compared to 282,233 in 2008. Other National Park sites around the country are experiencing similar increases.

Indian Memorial – We are still working to finalize work on the permanent interpretive panels for the interior walls of the Indian Memorial. Fy2009 focused on reviewing the existing interpretive graphics for the permanent interior panels and strategizing on our next phase. LIBI requested assistance from the IMR Facility Management office to help develop scopes of work, cost estimates, and evaluate construction methodology to help determine how best to translate the designs developed by the tribes onto the memorial surface.

133rd Anniversary Observance –The annual battle anniversaries are a unique opportunity to strengthen our relationships between the NPS and all of our affiliated tribes and other battlefield related organizations. We observed the 133rd Anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn this year with special programs from June 24-28, 2009. Highlights included hosting a program by the Arikara Old Scout's Society from North Dakota, a Lakota program by Enos Poor Bear, Jr of South Dakota, and the annual Big Horn riders and Morning Star rider's equestrian programs. Descendents of Northern Cheyenne warrior Noisy Walking conducted a special ceremony at the Noisy Walking marker on Battle Ridge followed by a program at the amphitheater about Northern Cheyenne participation in the battle and an honoring ceremony for former Battlefield Superintendent Barbara Sutteer, current Superintendent Kate Hammond, and Historian John Doerner in recognition of their service to the Battlefield. Friends of Little Bighorn Battlefield volunteers once again provided outstanding interpretation on park trails. Steve Alexander, living history portrayer, conducted the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Last Stand Hill and the Indian Memorial, and Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum

Association laid wreaths at Reno Benteen and Last Stand Hill. Michael Terry, well known Plains Indian historian, presented special programs to park visitors over Anniversary weekend.

Over Anniversary weekend Superintendent Kate Hammond attended the Friends of Little Bighorn Battlefield annual meeting, the CBHMA annual meeting and symposium, and attended one evening of the LBHA conference which was held in Billings in 2009.

Safety Program – We have stepped up safety awareness this year and continue to take a proactive approach to both public and employee safety at Little Bighorn Battlefield. We had no major recordable accidents due to our strong proactive approach to safety awareness at LIBI. A safety committee was established this year which held monthly safety meetings and training for staff; the Committee updated and instituted many new safety plans; and began working with the Zone 1 Safety Officer, Bob Glover, who came on board this fiscal year, to become more aware of National Park Service safety requirements, best practices, required plans, etc.

Administration – In FY2009 our ONPS Budget was \$ 1,198,900 with 14.56 FTE's, as compared to \$1,149,980 and 16.66 FTE's in FY2008. Cathy NotAfraid continued as the park's Administrative Officer. Administration continued to keep up with the high volume of requests including purchase orders, from other divisions, and the normal hectic pace of LIBI's daily operations. Prudence Pretty On Top, LIBI IT Tech was busy between LIBI and BICA, keeping both parks' computer and telephone systems in order. Sandy Harris began her third year at LIBI as Administrative Clerk. Alvina Morning transferred over to BICA as their new Office Assistant. A major point of 2009 was working on NPS Core-Ops to try to find ways to reduce LIBI's unsustainable budget projections. Ideas considered included sharing additional positions between LIBI & Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area (BICA) to strengthen ties, and share costs and staffing in an effort to reduce operating costs for both parks. (Note: NPS discontinued Core-Ops in 2010.)

Community Relations – LIBI continues to have a strong relationship with the local community and our battlefield related organizations including: Crow Tribe, Crow Agency; Northern Cheyenne Tribe; Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota Sioux Tribes; Hardin; Billings; Custer Country; Montana State Parks, and our other related government agencies. The outreach and educational programs foster strong ties with the community and Montana. Kate worked hard to maintain and strengthen our ties with the community, battlefield related organizations including

Friends of Little Bighorn Battlefield, Custer Battlefield Historical & Museum Association, Little Bighorn Associates, the Big Horn County Chamber of Commerce, Custer Country, and our associated tribes.

Friends of The Little Bighorn Battlefield – Bob Reece, President of Friends announced that 2009 marked the 13th anniversary of Friends of Little Bighorn, and was a record breaking year for support of projects at the battlefield. Accomplishments are included in their Annual Report, excerpted below:

I'm happy to report that Friends has had a record breaking year for our annual donations towards projects at LIBI. More on that in the bullet points below. Our general funds continued to surpass the \$30K level; however we will see it drop below that level in over two years due to our increased donations. Per our August 31st bank statement, we had a balance of \$35,802.26 in checking.

Here is a list of our accomplishments:

- The Friends provided 800 volunteer hours for the organization. This includes volunteer hours worked on the trails (see next bullet point).
- 17 members gave 146 volunteer hours assisting the NPS by providing interpretation along the Keogh and Deep Ravine Trails, Last Stand Hill, and Reno-Benteen Battlefield June 26-27, 2009, managing this year's fundraiser, and the Friends Feast.
- All board members except Kay Hunsaker (due to surgery) attended the first board meeting with the new superintendent on March 5, 2009 at the battlefield. It was a great chance for everyone to meet and we accomplished much.
- During that board meeting, Friends donated \$3,500.00 toward three projects which include:
 - \$300.00 for materials to construct platforms to place some of the archived collections storage cabinets off the floor in case of accidental water leak. The same donation also provides for materials to construct shelves to properly store the paintings that are currently leaning against each other.
 - \$2,400.00 to fund one teacher as part of the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program.
 - \$800.00 to replace the batteries that power the chief historian's electric cart. The final cost for the batteries totaled \$600.00. The surplus will remain in the LIBI general fund which we'll apply towards a future project.

- We held a donation event for Friends on June 26, 2009 on the second floor of the administration building. We only requested donations because we showed an encore presentation of the documentary, “Superintendent Edward Luce: Memories of Little Bighorn” produced by Bob Reece for Friends and the NPS. We asked for donations, instead of selling tickets, because we originally aired this program during our fundraiser in 2006. Bob also produced a short 25 minute film from some of the unedited Luce footage that was not included in the documentary. Additionally, we presented a seven minute short of Joe Medicine Crow viewing the footage so he could identify people in the Luce footage. Donations totaled \$60; however we sold several hundred dollars worth of raffle tickets as well.
- Friends held its annual general membership meeting on June 27, 2009 behind the administration building while providing a Friends Feast. This year we had the feast catered by Julie Elk shoulder. She provided an incredible dinner of Indian Tacos at the reasonable cost of \$350 plus \$40 tip. Friend’s members and their guest, and our volunteers seemed to enjoy the meal. Free bottled water (for volunteers all weekend) was donated by vendors thanks to Friends member Joanne Blair.
- We held our first raffle this year during our general membership meeting. Ticket prices started at \$5. We netted \$802.16. Prizes were donated by: Steve Alexander; John Doerner; Paul Beck; Richard Upton of Upton & Sons Publishers; Michael Elliott; Jerome Greene; Bob Reece; Paul Hedren; Ernie LaPointe; Neil Mangum; Ron Papandrea; Douglas Scott; and University of Oklahoma Press.
- Friends continue to provide updated information of the soldier and warrior participant list that the Chief Historian can use for record. We also maintain that list on the Friends website resulting in less correspondence work for the monuments Chief Historian.
- Our operational expenses continue to remain low. Our highest annual cost is our newsletter which cost about \$500 per issue. The board did vote in favor of covering travel expenses for board members to travel to Montana to meet with the superintendent in March 2009.
- Friends continue to sale products in the visitor center bookstore. Our best selling item continues to be the baseball cap adorned with the beautiful LIBI logo created and drawn by Chief Historian John Doerner. Our polo shirts are also selling well. Our Visitor Sales Committee is working on producing new postcards which will include an exterior photo of the Indian Memorial.
- The website continues to grow in content.

- While at LIBI in June 2009, board members Mike Semenock and Bob Reece met with Ken Woody regarding the placement of an informational kiosk in the visitor center. This was discussed and approved during our March 2009 board meeting. The idea for the kiosk is to have a small but visible box that promotes Friends and includes brochures. We found an ideal location on the wall beside the registry book at the front entrance. The kiosk will be built by Mike Semenock and will hang on the wall. It will include a Plexiglas backboard which will enable us to insert information sheets. This will enable us to keep information up-to-date. Friends will supply the brochures to NPS staff for them to keep the kiosk filled.

Memorial Day Observance - The annual Memorial Day Observance was held on May 26, 2009 at 11:00 AM in the amphitheater adjacent to Custer National Cemetery. Marvin Dawes, Lead Park Ranger Interpreter served as Master of Ceremony & as Key Note Speaker. Attendees included: Hardin American Legion Post #8 & VFW James Louk Post #7481 who served as Color Guards/Rifle Teams. Reverend Jerry Jasmer, U.S. Veteran and Lead Park Ranger Interpreter conducted the invocation and closing prayer. Ken Boggio of Hardin played taps.

Battlefield Tour Road (Rehabilitate Route 10) – In FY2009 after careful review by Kate Hammond on the potential for adverse effects and impacts to the fragile cultural and natural landscape, the project was put on hold until more public review and involvement, including our battlefield related organizations, and consultation with our historically affiliated tribes. Other alternatives will also be considered.

Battlefield Entrance Fee/Hours – Entrance fee of \$10.00 per vehicle or \$5.00 for bus passengers/pedestrians/motorcycles was in effect year-round in 2009. NPS Interagency (IA) Annual Pass, IA Access or IA Senior Pass holders received free access, including visitors to Custer National Cemetery. Summer hours began Memorial Day to Labor Day with the visitor center open 8:00 AM to 7:30 PM; Battlefield Tour Road was open 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM; and Custer National Cemetery & Last Stand Hill was open from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM through July 31st; & then 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM through Labor Day. The Custer Battlefield trails (Deep Ravine Trail/Keogh-Crazy Horse Trail & Indian Memorial-7th Cavalry Memorial Trail) & the Entrenchment Trail at Reno-Benteen Battlefield were open from 8:00 AM until 7:30 PM daily throughout the summer and are ADA/Universal Accessibility Compliant and remain extremely popular with the public.

Cooperating Associations & Concessions:

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) - Western National Parks Association (WNPA) continued to be an important partner and vital part of our interpretive operations in 2009, providing LIBI with Interpretive Supplement Account (ISA) contribution of \$37,515. Our total net sales generated from the Battlefield Bookstore were \$618,237, an increase from \$591,434 in 2008. WNPA provided funds for reprinting of all of our park trail guides (Custer National Cemetery, Deep Ravine Trail, & Entrenchment Trail), in addition to our popular summer newspaper/Interpretive Program Schedule distributed free to the public. WNPA also helped us to sponsor numerous NPS events including tribal consultation meetings. WNPA also had staff from their Tucson headquarters helping to update and rearrange the bookstore to enhance traffic flow and increase sales. Loreen Walks Crooked Arm our WNPA Field Manager continues to oversee the battlefield bookstore as well as supervise all WNPA staff. Brendon Nomme, WNPA Sales Assistant and all the WNPA employees are also to be commended for their hard work and dedication working the first-line in our popular and busy battlefield bookstore, providing a critical and essential visitor service.

Apsaalooke Tours - 2009 marked the 13th anniversary of our partnership with Little Bighorn College (Crow Tribal College) which has operated Apsaalooke Tours again under a concessions permit since 1997. The popular one-hour guided bus/van tours continue to be a very important visitor related interpretive service at LIBI and our popular with our visiting public. 495 bus/van tours were given to 8,095 visitors from Memorial Day to Labor Day in 2009, a decrease over 578 tours provided in 2008. The bus is ADA accessible for physically challenged visitors with the latest ADA compliant lift, and efficient air conditioned shuttle transportation available. Several new large capacity vans also served as back-up vehicles providing special VIP tours when needed to help off-set costs during periods of low visitation. The success of the concessions in 2009 is attributed to the dedication of LaShouna Rides The Bear and Noel Two Leggings who served as front-line Managers, and the Crow students from Little Bighorn College who share their unique cultural perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn and their unique tribal history in the Crow Tribal Homeland with our visiting public.

Interpretive Division - Ken Woody, Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services, reports a successful season and LIBI exceeded the 78% park goal of Visitor Understanding & Appreciation, scoring 92%, this, despite a decrease in visitation, with quality staff training and top-notch interpretive programs. The summer program lineup continued again with just the main "Battle Talk" presented 5 times

a day throughout the summer on the visitor center patio, and our popular orientation film “Their Shots Quit Coming”. The following is a breakdown of visitor services provided in 2009: 645 **Ranger Talks/Interpretive programs** given to 52,277 visitors (up from 46,145 during the same period in 2008); 6 community off-site programs were given to 143 students, (an increase over 102 in 2008) ; 1,505 Jr. Rangers were signed up (up from 933 in 2008); 2,823 orientation film showings of “**Their Shots Quit Coming**” were given to 57,951 visitors, a significant increase from only 32,327 in 2008; 32 on-site school tours were given to 1,168 students, up from 1,059 in 2008; 447 roving contacts/patrols interacted with over 2,998 visitors, up significantly compared to 1,975 in 2008. The Visitor Center register recorded 76,094 sign-ins compared to 74,801 in 2008. Marvin Dawes Sr. is our lead interpretive ranger. Jerry Jasmer continued in the term position assisting Ken and Marvin with operations, including leading Military Staff Rides at LIBI. A full team of seasonal interpretive Rangers in 2009 included: Michael Donahue of Temple, Texas (his 19th year); Frances Takes Enemy of Ft Smith, Montana, Steve Littleton of Ohio (6th year), Tom Smith returned under the Teacher-Ranger Teacher Program, Rob Hunter, of Sheridan, and Anahi Perez, Teacher Ranger Teacher Program, and first year seasonal Mike Mc Kinley.

Protection Ranger Activities

Chief Ranger Michael Stops reports the following:

Law Enforcement/Case Incidents - We had 33 case incidents in 2009 relating to various visitor services, which is down 17% from 50 case incidents in 2008. The Chief Ranger and one seasonal LE Ranger were on board, Skeeter He Does It, returning again for his second year.

Special Use Permits – 10 Special Use Permits were issued including 2 for commercial filming at LIBI, a slight decrease from 11 Special Use Permits issued in 2008. Stops reports that commercial film company inquiries were also higher than usual in 2009.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – We had no incidents involving medical emergencies in 2009.

133rd Anniversary observance - Went off without any major incidents, despite the heavy crowds during Little Bighorn Days and all the various events hosted by the NPS here. LIBI had two commissioned LE Rangers. LE Ranger Skeeter He Does It, Ft. Smith, MT, hired under the SCEP Program. Skeeter assisted Michael Stops with LE and Fee responsibilities throughout the fiscal year.

Fee Collection – Fee revenue in 2009 was down 1% from the previous year in 2008, despite an increase in visitation. This may be in part due to the multiple nation-wide fee-free weekends throughout the summer. We maintained a seasonal

staff of five Visitor Use Assistants, in the Student Temporary Employee Program (STEP). We had Paul Matt, Amy Schenderline, Cassie Nomee, Lindsey Stewart, and Joseph Vallie was Lead VUA in 2009.

Natural Resources:

Invasive Plant Management - Melana Stichman, Biological Sciences Technician is funded through our fee demonstration projects “Restore Cultural and Natural Landscape through Eradication of Non-Native Vegetation” and “Interpret and Preserve Resources for Park Visitor’s Enjoyment and Education” and submitted additional natural resource related projects into PMIS for LIBI. Melana and her staff, Shane Archuleta and Joseph Woody, treated 25 acres of noxious weeds throughout the monument. Ken Woody Jr. with the Maintenance Division assisted with weed treatment. Target invasive plants included: field bindweed, St. Johnswort, hounds tongue, white top, bulbous bluegrass, Russian olive, prickly lettuce, and several thistles and knapweeds. Natural Resources continued assisting Big Horn Canyon NRA with invasive plant management at Fort Smith. The Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) from Glacier National Park returned to help LIBI staff treat field St. Johnswort throughout the Custer Battlefield sector, and Russian Olive within the Little Bighorn River corridor. Development continued on an Invasive Plant Management Plan that will involve ten parks located in the northern Rocky Mountains, including Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. This plan will be used to direct the management of invasive plants/noxious weeds and will include the use of a suite of tools that allow the park to effectively manage area natural and cultural resources with minimal effects from non-native invasive plants.

Restoration – At Fort Smith, the Natural Resources crew began clearing woody vegetation over the water collection system that provides public drinking water to Ok-A-Beh marina. It is a constant battle keeping roots from penetrating the expensive underground collection system. Native seed is planted to promote a thick, healthy grass stand which will act as a barrier preventing re-establishment of undesirable and woody vegetation.

New prairie Wildlife Nature Guide and Checklist – Melana Stichman finalized a checklist brochure for visitors. The free color checklist includes illustrations and is an important reference for visitors on identification of plants, birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles living in our unique prairie ecosystem. The project was funded through our entrance fee program, and will be available to the public in December 2009.

Prairie Plant Identification Sign Project – Shane Archuleta, a seasonal Biotech hired through the National Park Service Student Diversity program, constructed an educational plant identification plot this summer near the Visitor center as part of a developmental learning experience and benefit for the host park. Shane commented “Visitors were asking me more questions about the local plants that grew in the park than anything else, so I wanted to help the public understand more about the local plants.” Shane researched local plants, interviewed park staff and Crow Tribal members. The project augments the new wildlife checklist and was funded through the Recreational Fee Program.

Severe Summer Drought – 2009 marked the 10th year of drought in Montana and much of the intermountain west. This situation did improve slightly with sporadic rainfall but LIBI still had severe water shortages and high fire danger conditions, and continued to effect and lower the Little Bighorn River and area aquifers to record levels. As a fire prevention measure commensurate with Big Horn County, we enacted a no smoking ban outside of vehicles which went into effect in late July until conditions improved in late fall. Temperatures reached record high levels in July and August with 100+ temperatures recorded. The prolonged drought impacted our abilities to provide adequate irrigation to Custer National Cemetery and battlefield lawns and pine and cedar trees. Lonnie Hergenrider, Facility Manager and our Maintenance division once again met the challenge and scheduled irrigation during the evening and early morning hours to maximize water retention and minimize evaporation. The heat challenged our NPS staff, including those who work outside and we have continued to provide special cooled units that dispense bottled water for employee safety at key work areas and buildings. Visitors were cautioned about the extreme temperatures during the ranger talks and bus tours.

Division of History & Cultural Resources:

Museum Curator - Sharon Small, interim Museum Curator under the Student Career Employment program (SCEP) was busy in 2009 starting a 100% inventory of the collections, planning various PMIS Projects, correcting the ICMS database, and identifying overall needs of the museum collections to regional staff. In March, in response to the annual call for technical assistance from the curator, IMR Museum Services Program Archivist and assistant traveled to LIBI to complete a cursory overview of the archival component of the park’s overall museum program. A review of the park’s current access and research policies also was

completed. cursory efforts were made to identify any additional backlog of archival materials and object collections during the on-site visit. She is working with the annual upgrade to the Automated National Catalog System Plus (ANCS+). Small processed over 75 research requests, 37 photograph requests, and had 11 on-site researchers utilizing the museum collection. Small resigned from the SCEP program in September 2009.

Historian – Chief Historian John A. Doerner processed over 400 research requests on the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 2009 (339email; 340+ telephone; 55 on-site walk-in; & 5 by regular mail) and had 15 on-site researchers that utilized the White Swan Library Collection. Doerner continued to accession new library publications as well as upgrade the historic map and oversize case aerial photographs and blueprints with protective archival covers. He also continued extensive research and field work which has been on-going since 1999 when he first championed the placement of red granite markers at Cheyenne and Lakota casualty sites to honor and preserve their casualty sites on the battlefield, complimenting the existing historic 7th Cavalry markers first erected by the War Department in 1890 to denote soldier casualty sites.

White Swan Library - Historian Doerner has been keeping up the library collection and announced that the library has 5,069 books pertaining to the Battle, Indians Wars, Frontier Army, Plains Indians, Natural Resources and related subjects. Old acidic file folders are being replaced with new archival acid free file folders and archival document holders for long-term conservation and preservation of the library collection. Rare books and documents were pulled and accessioned into the museum collection.

Red Face Man Warrior casualty and Bloody Knife Research –Historian Doerner was busy in 2009 conducting historical research and field survey on Red Face Man, Minnikojou Lakota Sioux warrior killed in action 25 June 1876 on the west slope of Battle Ridge while fighting against Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's Battalion during the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The casualty site and stone cairn was carefully mapped and documented. Doerner also conducted research on the casualty site of Bloody Knife, Arikara Guide killed in the valley fight, and using a rare 1876 map by an 2nd Cavalry officer, located Bloody Knife's casualty site using modern aerial photographs for comparison, and documented the site for possible future marker relocation and placement.

Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) Project – LIBI’s CLI was at 100% draft in 2009. The CLI is a joint partnership with NPS and Utah State University and is an important planning document that provides an accurate up-to-date baseline of the powerful cultural landscape. The CLI identified and documented each feature of the cultural landscape including location (within & outside the NPS boundary) , historic overview,/timeline, analysis of historic maps, photography (including aerial), Little Bighorn River, Indian encampment, pony herd site, soldier-warrior movements and positions, casualty sites, archeological record, historic structures including headstones, monuments, and memorials, entrenchments warrior casualties/stone cairns, road-trail networks, and geographic features.

Cultural Resource Program Review – We held an important Cultural Resource Program Review on June 9-11, 2009 with staff from LIBI, BICA, and CRM staff from NPS-Denver and Santa Fe. The productive workshop results in 11 priorities identified for cultural resources: 1) Museum Collections Storage; 2) Resource Significance Maps to aid in future planning-development; 3) Digitization of the Museum-Library Collections; 4) Environmental History of 1876 landscape; 5) Archeological Overview & Assessment; 6) Historic Resource Study/Base Map and Historic Register Nomination Updates; 7) Consultation Plan with our 12 historically affiliated tribes (now increased to 17); 8) Ethnographic Overview & Assessment; 9) Cemetery Headstones Conservation Plan-Treatment; 10) Cultural Landscape Report (CLR); and 11) Oral Histories Project.

Tribal Consultation Meeting – We held a consultation meeting with representatives of our 12 historically affiliated tribes on September 8, 2009 to touch base with them on battlefield related projects and overall stewardship of Little Bighorn Battlefield. While not all the tribes were able to attend, the turnout was good. Follow-up meetings were scheduled in 2010 to strengthen communication and dialogue between us.

Maintenance Operations - Our maintenance staff (Les Frickle, Jimmie Brothers, Wayne Not Afraid, Vel Grinsteiner, Richard Struck, and Kenny Woody, Jr.) supervised under Facility Manager Lonnie Hergenrider, were busy with perpetual care of Custer National Cemetery which is an important feature on our powerful cultural landscape. Keeping the park irrigated and supplied with water through another summer of severe drought and extreme temperatures was challenging. Replacement of diseased and damaged Colorado blue spruce and Cedar Trees (first planted by the War Department in the early 1930’s) in recent years has been a major achievement. Several major equipment upgrades were made, and on-going projects included upgrading our irrigation sprinkler systems and making maximum

use of overnight and early morning-late evening irrigation to maximize water retention during our eighth year of drought. Lonnie Hergenrider served on two details and one temporary promotion as General Operations and Maintenance Supervisor in the North District, Big Horn Canyon NRA. Maintenance Crews continued to work cooperatively at LIBI and BICA and shared equipment and resources effectively. The Chief Historian John Doerner worked with Lonnie Hergenrider and the Veterans Administration on future upgrades of all of our outdated and worn-damaged concrete cemetery section stakes. Another significant achievement was replacement of damaged sidewalks in several sections of the cemetery as well as along the Entrenchment Trail at Reno-Benteen Battlefield, and upgrades to park employee housing/quarters. An unexpected problem with our electrical line to the visitor center occurred on September 22, 2008 indicating need for future replacement and upgrade of equipment in 2009. Daily ground maintenance, trash removal, building and restroom cleaning, especially at the visitor center and public restrooms, as well as snow removal of the infrastructure road, parking lots, and sidewalks continued to be a top priority. Jimmie Brothers spent a good part of the year on a detail to Bandelier National Monument.

Custer National Cemetery- A unique feature of Little Bighorn Battlefield (located in Historic District One) is Custer National Cemetery, established in 1879, which contains the remains of nearly 5,000 military personnel and/or their spouse or dependent from the Indians Wars, Spanish American War, World War One, World War Two, Korean War, and Vietnam. Custer National Cemetery remains a popular destination for visitors, who take time to walk the hallowed ground and reflect upon the many contributions and sacrifices made by America's military and our veterans. The cemetery is closed except for instances where deceased veterans or their dependents have reserved plots. In 2009 we had a total of 10 interments (including one cremain burial), with 442 people in attendance.