

Lewis and Clark State Historical Site celebrates historic arrival of famed explorers

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HARTFORD - The arrival of **Lewis and Clark to Camp Dubois** was celebrated Saturday, Dec. 10 at the **Lewis and Clark State Historical Site in Hartford**. The event is usually held outside, even in the cold, but this year everything was placed inside the museum, because the replica of the fort had a wall collapse in May 2016. **Site interpreter Michael Stout** said the museum was awaiting state funding to repair the wall and have outdoor events again, meaning the estimated time for those repairs is unknown at this time. Despite that misfortune, visitors to the museum Saturday were able to get an idea of the conditions Lewis and Clark faced when they first reached the area of their eventual departure on Dec. 12, 1804. Inside the museum, several artifacts were on display, including beads, navigation tools, surgical instruments, animal furs and even a historically-accurate replica of a British cannon. That cannon was brought by Randall Guenther of the Second Regiment U.S. Artillery reenactment group. He said it was built to exact specifications of a British light field artillery piece, which would have been contemporary with the expedition. Since it was inside, Guenther was unable to fire it, but assured the group takes the opportunity to do so at any chance they can get. "Whenever we get the chance to fire it for people, we do," he said. "We will use any excuse we can get to play with it." Lewis and Clark arrived at Camp Dubois early in the winter of 1804. The historians gathered at the museum said the actual site of the camp may be located in West Alton, or even in the middle of the river, due to the river's

constant shifting. When the historical duo arrived at Camp Dubois, which was located at the mouth of Wood River Creek, the weather was relatively mild. Within a few days of them arriving, however, one of the worst winters on record ravaged the camp, forcing members of the expedition to utilize the "buddy system" when leaving the camp due to the dangerous conditions. Food and supplies were provided to the camp by nearby settlements of Goeshen and Milton as well as the 4,000 inhabitants of St. Louis. The site reenactors and historians said Lewis and Clark would have camped on the Missouri side of the river originally to prepare for their expedition through the Louisiana Purchase, but there was a hostile Spanish military presence located there at the time.

