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Bus tour eyed for state's 150th birthday bash

By The Associated press

RENO — A mobile museum and special license plate are among ideas being considered for a yearlong celebration of Nevada's 150th birthday.

The Nevada Sesquicentennial Planning Committee, at a meeting in Reno last week, said the \$1.5 million bus tour could bring historical artifacts, texts and displays to all of the state's 17 counties.

"This is a great idea because instead of Nevadans coming to us, this is us coming to Nevadans," panel Co-Chairwoman Neena Laxalt said.

Peter Barton, administrator of the Nevada Division of Museums and History, said Michigan-based MRA Experiential Touring Equipment would provide a tour bus that opens from the side and features 1,000 square feet of exhibit space.

"It's a great idea," said Co-Chairman Bob Brown, publisher of the Las Vegas Review-Journal. "It's a great opportunity to reach the entire state ... That's what we have to do."

Panel members plan to consider details and funding for the celebration at a Dec. 14 meeting in Las Vegas, the Reno Gazette-Journal reported.

Along with donations, they're planning a special license plate for Nevada's sesquicentennial to help fund the celebration.

The committee's mission is to not use public funding for the events, Laxalt said.

Gov. Brian Sandoval has said the seven-member committee will work with staff members to raise money and plan a year of events starting on Halloween 2013 and culminating on the big day Oct. 31, 2014.

President Abraham Lincoln signed Nevada's declaration of statehood on that day in 1864 during the Civil War.

Sandoval says the state will apply for grants and sponsorships to support the events.

Kathleen Noneman, spokeswoman for the Nevada Women's History Project, said the birthday celebration should include attention of women's suffrage because 2014 will mark the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in Nevada.

"We want to make sure that the celebration of the 150th anniversary of statehood also recognizes the important part women played," Noneman said.