

D17B051

**HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY COMMISSION
BUDGET TESTIMONY**

FY2015

Section 3. Management and Fund Sources

HSMCC should comment on how it can increase special fund revenues

Historic St. Mary's City Commission (HSMCC) which governs Historic St. Mary's City, a museum of history and archaeology at Maryland's first capital, continues to seek new revenue streams and to stabilize, as much as possible, existing revenue sources. However, given the nature of the museum's legislated mission to preserve the first capital's townlands and curate its archaeological artifacts, there are portions of the museum's operations that cannot be monetized and thereby generate revenue.

HSMC seeks to offer programs that are valued by educators and community members, appropriately utilize all its resources to support its operations, and improve its facilities and exhibits to attract rentals and visitors.

Revenue Sources

Education Programs:

- Admissions revenues hold steady since the number of school tours are relatively consistent each year.
- Education staff has developed and launched new programs for a greater range of ages and interest.
 - By focusing on psychographics, as well as demographics, staff has developed appealing new programs, including pre-school activities, performances, and specialty workshops, such as hide tanning or wreath making.
 - Research indicates that membership increases with popular programming such as *Little Explorers* for pre-school children or the family-friendly *Hearth and Home*.

Bed and Breakfast:

- The Inn has a dependable clientele among visitors to the college and a good business of weekenders from the DC metro area.
- A marketing campaign for the Inn includes hosting bridal shows, web-marketing and promotions; a direct mail campaign will be instituted early this year.
- With the donated labor of a volunteer painting contractor and the guidance of a volunteer interior designer, the museum continues interior renovations begun in 2011.

Food Service:

- HSMC's Food Service contact has reached the 18 month grace period for the caterer to established Food Service at St. Mary's city.

- The museum will recognize 10% of sales for services provided by the exclusive caterer for any catering done within our organization beginning January 1, 2014.
 - The museum now provides food service for its guests. The availability food service helps support museum visitation and generate lunch and brunch business among local residents.

Site and Event Rentals:

- HSMCC saw an increase of 39% in site rentals and as expected we have gradually recovered our business for private and corporate events as the economy improved.
- The Department of General Services (DGS) is working with the HSMC to rehabilitate the exterior of the Inn at Brome Howard. The museum has lost significant site rental revenue because of the Inn's dilapidate condition. It expects revenues to increase when the Inn's exterior is restored.

Land Leases:

- Farm leases are dependable as they are signed for a three year term and local farmers are eager to cultivate as many acres as possible. The Commission has leased every available acre.
- HSMC has signed a land-lease agreement with T-Mobile for construction of a telephone tower. We hope to see construction of the tower in the next fiscal year. The lease would be signed for five years with multiple options to extend.

Housing Rentals:

- Revenues have increased from HSMC rental properties because recent renovations have made up for years of deferred maintenance and therefore lower rents.
- HSMC has also renovated and converted a property that has been used as the Museum Costume space to a rental property that will earn additional revenue.

Marketing:

- Visitation in FY2013 increased but has not reached the level of 2009 and 2010 when the museum and St. Mary's County increased its paid advertising for the 375th anniversary of the state. The museum has been forced to cut its marketing budget but has been using a variety of social media to reach potential visitors. It has redesigned its website to be more attractive and user friendly in order to generate awareness and interest among the public.

Site Improvements:

The Commission has taken the initiative to build its infrastructure to facilitate site rentals for events and public use, according to its legislated mission. It has:

- Raised private funds of \$150,000 to support the design and construction of a wooden pavilion. Use of the pavilion will reduce the need for Maintenance to set up tents, provide a sheltered space for events and the 25,000 school children who visit the museum each year.
- Received \$200,000 in grant funding from the National Parks Service and Access Maryland to rehabilitate its Chancellor's point site for recreational use. This 66 acre site on the St. Mary's River will provide opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, picnicking and walking the museum's nature trails.
- Received grant funds from the Maryland Heritage Area Authority to develop exhibits that will draw new and return visitors.
 - The three lead coffins found in the Brick Chapel and the remains of the Lord Baltimore's youngest son will return to the Chapel. Visitors will be able to view the coffins as they were found through a glass section of floor. The remains will be preserved in an adjacent

crypt.

- The museum will restore the only known duplex slave quarter remaining in the state. Staff has worked with community members and descendants to preserve the quarter and understand the people, enslaved and free, who lived there.

Maintenance Challenges:

- The Commission struggles to prepare the grounds for site rentals and public visitation because its budget supports only one full-time grounds keeper for all of its 835 acres, 5 miles of trails, 2 miles of shoreline, and multiple gardens.
 - When possible, the museum hires two seasonal staff to maintain the grounds.
 - If the museum cannot hire additional staff, it must reallocate the labor of its small maintenance staff of three to maintain the grounds.
- This shortage of maintenance staff has created a significant backlog of deferred maintenance of the museum's 100 structures.
- The Commission is appreciative of the support it receives from DGS. The three repair projects funded in FY14 will help improve the conditions of Commission properties but the backlog of maintenance remains because the museum does not have sufficient funds for materials necessary for repair.

Staffing/Turnover Rate:

- At the end of 2013, the Commission had four positions open. The departure of the two staff in close sequence was unexpected and the Commission is required to submit a waiver for approval to fill any PIN position.
- The museum struggles to fill a PIN position for a Maintenance Technician, because of budget constraints and therefore, relatively low pay. It is difficult to retain skilled and dependable grounds and maintenance staff who move into better positions elsewhere and the lower-skilled staff can be unreliable and incapable of performing tasks necessary for building, vehicle, and grounds maintenance.

Volunteers and Donated Goods and Services:

- The Commission supplements its paid staff with volunteers who have contributed significantly to the operation of Historic St. Mary's City through donations of time and materials.
 - In 2013, volunteers contributed more than 28,000 hours in such areas as maintenance of gardens, events, administrative tasks, and education.
 - Interns from St. Mary's College and other colleges provide short-term support in a variety of operational areas.

Issues (p. 11 DLS Analysis)

1. Reaccreditation Process Begins

Given the expanded scope of review that American Alliance of Museums (AAM) will give HSMCC in fiscal 2016, the director should comment on ideas HSMCC has for working with local communities and other organizations in Southern Maryland to promote education of and access to Maryland historical resources.

HSMC recognizes the museum field's growing emphasis on partnerships and providing access to the community. The museum has been building partnerships with other organizations and seeking to provide better access to resources in order to align with best practices in the museum field.

The museum will continue to develop opportunities for access and programs that serve the needs of educators and the broader community, particularly underserved populations. Examples of current efforts are listed below.

- Corporate Leaders: Developed a partnership with International consultant firm. Booz Allen Hamilton to develop a cloud-based collections database for on-line research, making more research available on the museum's redesigned website.
- Website access: Provides greater access to the research and student/teacher resources at no cost
- Community members: working members of the African American community to develop an exhibit about African American experience in St. Mary's County
- Research Facilities: The new Anne Arundel Hall will also provide space for students and visiting scholars to study HSMC collections.
- Philanthropic Organizations: seeking funds to bring museum programs to under-served groups.
- Local theater troupe: Co-developed and directed production of *Much Ado about Nothing* presented outdoors at HSMC and indoors at the Three Notch Theater. Developed revenue share strategy.
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts: developing badge programs related to colonial history and culture
- MD Commission on African American History and Culture: partners in a grant to preserve and interpret the duplex slave quarter adjacent to the Brome Howard plantation house (Inn at Brome Howard).
- MD Commission on Indian Affairs and Tribal leadership of Maryland's Indigenous People
- Schools: consulting with teachers and social studies coordinators to develop programs to complement classroom learning.
- Home School families: offer bi-annual homeschool day to complement at-home educational programs
 - Offer competitive interpretive internship program for homeschool students between 9-11 years old.
- St. Mary's College of Maryland and other institutions of higher education
 - Provide internship opportunities in a variety of museum departments
 - Offer academic courses in Museum Studies
- Maryland Arts Council: participated on the Apprenticeship Program to train local resident in spar making as part of Maryland Living Traditions program.
 - Staff members has presented demos at Folklife Festival in Baltimore for three years
 - Awarded grant to present program on Stuffed ham, a local traditional food. Program has been incorporated into annual harvest event.