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Fund for Commission of Historic Preservation

The legislature of the State of Nevada established the Commission for Cultural Affairs in 1991. The commission began its grant program in 1993, pursuing its mandate to preserve historic structures and to establish a network of community cultural centers throughout the state. It has participated in the restoration of 60 significant buildings. 29 of it's projects are complete and functioning as community centers. 15 of its ongoing projects are partially open to the public. Over half a million people visited Commission supported facilities in the last 12 months.

Facts:

60 buildings benefited from commission funding 1993-2002
44 projects opened to the public since 1993
556,802 people visited Commission-supported facilities last year
Over \$40,000,000 spent on construction projects including matching funds
\$103,000,000 estimated additional indirect impact on Nevada's economy
\$19,000,000 contributed annually to the states tourism economy

The Commission for Cultural Affairs

While the Commission was established to enrich the states cultural life the projects have also had a positive impact on the state's economy.

The Commission serves as the advisory board for the Department of Cultural Affairs, and it implements a grant program and it is that grant program that I wish to speak to you about today.

This grant program relies on state bond sales. The revenue from these bonds is to be used for the rehabilitation of historic buildings to be used as cultural centers. When awarding these grants the Commission considers the following:

1. Accessibility to the community
2. The promotion of tourism
3. The promotion or preservation of some historic or prehistoric feature of Nevada
4. The diversity of the types of cultural organizations benefiting from the project.
5. The use of the resulting programs for classroom training in the arts and the humanities.
6. The ability of the project to sustain itself after commission support ends.

Since 1993 the Commission has reviewed 199 applications requesting over \$65,000,000. It has distributed almost \$20,000,000. While the program has made a significant contribution it only partially meets the demonstrated need. And while this program will never be able to fully fund the need I am hoping we can increase the aid available.

Since 1993 grant recipients contributed in excess of \$20,000,000 in match funds. The program has created construction jobs. A study by Tim Rubald, Director of the Business Development and Research Division of the Nevada Commission on Economic Development, estimates that the

ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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SUBMITTED BY: Dr. Larry Moses

economic output of the program's construction grants has totaled over \$62,000,000. Many of these construction dollars are in small rural communities. In addition the Rubald report indicates that the effect of creating facilities throughout the state has boosted the state's economy an additional \$41,000,000.

Over 500,000 visitors per year now enjoy Commission supported facilities throughout the state. This has an estimated \$19,000,000 effect on the state's economy each year.

Completed Projects and Phases

Since awarding its first grants in 1993, the Commission has consistently received requests that far exceed its available support. It has spread its funding as far as possible by adopting a phased approach to its projects. A positive outcome of this practice has been more matching than originally anticipated.

During its first nine grant cycles 29 projects completed all rehabilitation phases. These buildings are now open to the public as community cultural centers. These include sites that range from:

- City of Sparks Glendale School
- Logandale's Elementary School
- Reno's McKinley Park School
- Douglas County's Old High School
- Reno's Riverside Hotel
- Boulder City's Boulder Dam Hotel
- City of Caliente's Union Pacific Depot
- Elko Chamber of Commerce's Sherman Station

The Commission has helped establish museums, theaters, archives and art galleries in every part of the state.

While not complete 15 other projects are open to the public:

- Churchhill Arts Council's Oats Park School in Fallon
- Western Folklife Center's Pioneer Building in Elko
- Virginia City's Fourth Ward School Museum
- Esmeralda County Courthouse in Goldfield

Other Projects

Southern Nevada

The commission assisted in the rehabilitation of Boulder City's Railroad Depot which is now open to the public at the Clark County Museum.

The Commission assisted the City of Mesquite in the restoration of the Desert Valley Museum.

The unincorporated town of Logandale was helped with the restoration of the Old Logandale Elementary school which now houses a multipurpose cultural facility, which includes a museum, library and a cultural arts center.

Northern Nevada

The Gold Hill Depot outside Virginia City with the help of the Commission is being restored and is open to the public giving them a glimpse of what life was like over a century ago

Reno's McKinley Park School lying in the heart of Reno's Truckee River Arts and Cultural district is a focal point and cultural magnet for the local arts community.

In 1999 the Commission joined the coalition of forces working to rehabilitate Reno's Riverside Hotel and a year later artist began moving into the facility.

In 1865 the residence of Douglas County built a courthouse that is now the oldest surviving government building in the state of Nevada. Today it is refurbished and continues to educate people of Nevada and their visitors in the state's early history.

The Carson Historical Society with the help of the Commission saved the old Minden high school and converted it into a museum and cultural center. Open since 1995 as the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center it has become a key element in Douglas County's cultural life.

In the early 1990's the Churchill Arts Council launched the Oats Park rehabilitation project and it will celebrate its grand opening in 2003.

In 1930 Hawthorne erected the Sixth Street School. By the 1990's there were several efforts to demolish it. Mineral County Council on the Arts funded in part by the Commission restored the structure and transformed it into an arts and cultural center.

The McGill Drug Store constructed in 1909 houses an intact soda fountain and a complete inventory of pharmaceutical supplies dating to the mid twentieth century. With three small grants the Commission helped save this remarkable historic resource.

In 1880 James Allen Wadsworth constructed a two story adobe mercantile store during the 1990's a local group, the Panaca Heritage Center began restoring the old store, with the help of the commission the project was completed in 2002.

The Las Vegas Springs has provided water for the Las Vegas valley inhabitants from prehistoric times. In 1917 the Little Spring House was constructed by the Las Vegas Land and Water Company in 1917. The Commission has made two grants to the preservation of this structure.

The Western Folklore Center in Elko enjoys an international reputation as the sponsor of Elko's annual "Cowboy Poetry Gathering" Funding assistance from the commission was a key to the restoration of the center formerly the Elko Pioneer Hotel.

In 1903 Sherman Station was established 60 miles south of Elko. In 1997 the buildings at Sherman Station were moved to Elko by the Chamber of Commerce for restoration. With assistance from the Commission Sherman Station serves Elko as a visitor center as well as an office for the Chamber and a

The Carson City Brewery was established in 1860 and in 1948 the building was converted into the Nevada Appeal's production plant. The Brewery Arts Center developed plans to restore the structure. Between 1993 and 2001 the Commission awarded support for numerous phases of the restoration effort. It now functions as a small theater, an art exhibition center, a store and multi-purpose conference facility

From 1876-1936 the Fourth Ward School in Virginia City served as a school as well as a community center. With the help of the Commission it houses museum exhibits both permanent and traveling, art galleries, workshop and performance spaces. It receives 10s of thousands visitors each year. It is nationally recognized as a model for historical preservation and cultural development projects. The White House Millennium Council for Historic Preservation selected the school as one of America's treasures.

The Commission has worked with two Native American groups to assist in the restoration of three buildings in Carson City's Stewart Indian Complex. One building houses space for Tribal archive and cultural coordinator and another is home to a Washoe language immersion program.

New Projects

The Commission's recent initiatives demonstrate the dramatic need for continued support for this program.

In 2002 the Commission awarded for the first time funding to help rehabilitate the Las Vegas Post office and the Old Las Vegas High School.

It also provided funds for restoration of one of the railroad cottages located at the Clark County Heritage Museum.

Other new projects include:

1. A ranching museum in Battle Mountain
2. The Lovelock Railroad Depot
3. Tuscarora's Masonic Hall
4. Million Dollar Court House in Pioche
- 5.

Summary

For the past 10 years the Commission has operated under NRS 233 which provides for \$2 million dollars worth of bonds being sold each year to fund the projects. While this has been a great benefit in the past more and more projects are being identified and the demand on this source has grown. This year over 30 organization looked for over \$8, million dollars of support. I am asking that this committee and legislature support an increase to \$5 million in bonds each year to support these restoration efforts. While this will not meet the demands it will allow for more help and encourage more non-profit organization to help save the history of the state of Nevada. Without this funding we will continue to lose the old buildings that serve to keep the history of Nevada alive. Understanding that this will increase the debt of the state and obligation of the state to pay off these bonds it is a small impact on the state budget in relation to the return to the state economy.