

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2013-14 Performance Report

Will Rogers Memorial Commission

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission, as adopted by the Commission and its staff in 2010 and reaffirmed since, is to collect, preserve, and share the life, wisdom, and humor of Will Rogers for all generations.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Steve Gragert, Director, P.O. Box 157, Claremore, OK 74018-0157; 918 343 8118 office; 405 612 1965 mobile; skgragert@willrogers.com

GOVERNANCE:

By statute, the Will Rogers Memorial Commission is comprised of seven members, one of whom is a lineal descendent of Will Rogers, unless no surviving lineal descendant of Will Rogers chooses to serve. Each member, including the Chair, is appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Each member is appointed to a six-year term and may be eligible for reappointment. Each serves without compensation. Each member holds office until a successor is appointed and qualified. Each is subject to removal in the same manner as other state officials not subject to impeachment.

Current members of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission are:

Jim Hartz, Chair	Philip D. Hixon
Phillip B. Albert	Theodore L. Jones
William H. Biard	Stephen R. Pazzo, Jr.
Jennifer Rogers Etcheverry	

The Commission does not operate with set committees, but ad hoc committees can be formed if needed.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Please see accompanying minutes of the two quarterly meetings of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission held since 1 July 2013. The minutes of the meeting of 21 September have been approved. The minutes of 1 November 2013 will be presented for approval at the Commission's next regularly scheduled quarterly meeting, 15 February 2014. The Commission does not have an attendance policy.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

The Commission continues to cooperate fully with the implementation of the state IT and Telecommunications, Transfer, and Modernization program. As we reported last year, the agency's direct participation has been minimal because the extent of IT and telecommunications applications in our small agency remains relatively insignificant.

We have converted almost fully from hardcopy filing systems to electronic. We continue to adapt and use electronic documentation whenever possible.

In a move to achieve efficiencies, the Will Rogers Memorial Commission contracted with Agency Business Services (ABS) of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services in August 2010. For almost three years, ABS provided the Commission with support services in procurement, purchasing, accounts payable, general accounting, reporting, asset

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management, accounts receivable and billing, document imaging, and other financial services.

Our partnership with ABS resulted in hours saved and the opportunity for members of our staff to redirect time and skills to other tasks in our agency that needed to be addressed. Unfortunately, due to the accumulative impact of reduced or flat appropriations over the past five years and a proposed increase in fees by ABS for this fiscal year, we had to reduce our contractual services with ABS. We now perform more of the financial services in-house, leaving less well tended important areas of our operations and programming.

As resources allow, the Commission continues to convert to more efficient lighting systems, such as LED, throughout both museums. The upfront costs are greater, but we have achieved savings through the longer lifespan of the new bulbs and systems.

The Memorial Museum began charging admission on 1 January 2012. We netted \$56,247 in calendar year 2012 and \$52,133 in calendar year 2013. The downturn the second year resulted from lower attendance numbers, perhaps impacted by the introduction of an admission fee. Because of the decrease in visitor numbers we did not increase our fees in the current fiscal year. It is hoped that collecting admissions will help fill the gap caused by recent budget reductions.

CORE MISSION:

The Will Rogers Memorial Commission's core mission, as stated above, is unique among state agencies and has been since it was established by statute in 1937. The Commission is not required to provide services that are outside its core mission. No other state agency provides exactly the same services that the Commission provides in fulfillment of its unique mission. The Commission does partner with other state-operated museums whenever and wherever possible and appropriate, such as in museum-standard conservation measures and consultation about collections management, best practices, exhibit design and installation, and educational programming.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

No private entity in Oklahoma or elsewhere provides the same services that the Commission provides in fulfillment of its unique mission. The Commission does partner with other museums, public and private, whenever and wherever possible and appropriate, such as in conservation services and consultation about collections management, best practices, exhibit design and installation, educational programming, and many other areas.

The officers and director of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission continue to work with the Board of Directors of Will Rogers Heritage, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation operating publicly as the Will Rogers Memorial Foundation, towards the creation of public/private partnership embracing management, maintenance, and sustaining support of the Will Rogers Memorial Museum, Claremore, and Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch, Oologah.

As provided by statute, the Commission has leased to Will Rogers Heritage retail space in the Will Rogers Memorial for sale of, but not limited to, books, periodicals, memorabilia, souvenirs, and other items related to Will Rogers.