

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

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2014-15 Performance Report

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Will Rogers Memorial Commission

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

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

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Tad Jones, Executive Director, P.O. Box 157, Claremore, OK 74018-0157; 918-343-8118 (office); 918-520-4307 (mobile); tjones@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. The current members of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission are as follows:

Phil Albert, Chair  
Philip Hixon, Vice Chair  
Jennifer Rogers Etcheverry, Secretary/Treasurer  
Bill Biard  
Linda Bradshaw  
Wyatt McCrea  
Jack Spinks

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

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Please see the accompanying approved minutes of the previous four regularly scheduled meetings, in addition to two special meetings, from the past twelve months. The Commission does have an attendance policy.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

The Will Rogers Memorial Commission has adjusted the hours of operation at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Through this, there will be a 22% savings in the cost of front end personnel costs, as well as energy savings. In addition to the energy savings realized by the operations changes, we are changing much of the lighting in the museum to more efficient L.E.D. bulbs that will help us meet our 20/20 energy savings requirements.

Also, the Will Rogers Memorial Museum began charging a fee for admission in 2012. We netted \$56,246.92 in 2012, \$52,132.61 in 2013, and \$47,536.01 in 2014. The Commission decided to increase the admission fee rates by two dollars for each adult, and one dollar

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each for bus tours, senior adults, and military personnel. Also, in order to address the lower attendance numbers, the museum will be hosting new community events, educational programs, and promotions to encourage attendance growth.

The Will Rogers Memorial Commission is now operating the museum store, which had been operated by the Will Rogers Memorial Foundation. We will work to make it a strong revenue stream for the agency.

Additionally, the Will Rogers Memorial Commission is exploring the possibility of leasing land at the Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch for grazing cattle.

#### 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, to help support the mission of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission.