

# **Allegany Museum**

## **Testimony**

Before the Appropriations Committee  
Capital Budget Subcommittee  
Maryland House of Delegates

March 16, 2015

## **Senate Bill – SB 56**

Statement of Gary Bartik, President  
Allegany Museum  
3 Pershing Street  
Cumberland, Maryland

Accompanied by  
Victor Rezendes, Vice President Administration

Madam Chair and members of the Appropriations Committee

The Allegany Museum is continuing to grow as a national heritage destination. We have made steady progress in restoring our historic building but we need your help to finish the restoration. Once our building restoration is finished, the Allegany Museum will be a national attraction. We are working on becoming a Smithsonian affiliate and have been awarded a traveling Smithsonian exhibit for 2015 from the Maryland Humanities Council.

We are a volunteer nonprofit organization with a cadre of 65 dedicated volunteers. Our business model is sound. We own our historic building and lease part of the space to mostly state and local government tenants. The lease income helps cover most of the museum's operating expenses, the remainder comes from local donations. However, our income is not sufficient to restore our historic building which was a former Federal Courthouse and Post Office. This first phase of restoration was made possible by the support of government entities at the local and state levels, as well as private donations.

We have restored and renovated the second floor of this historic building to house our museum but the remaining three floors still need work. When completely restored, the new building will triple our exhibit space, add space for collections and archival storage, a children's learning center, a research center, space for public programs, and greatly expand the Allegany Museum's scope of operations. We will begin restoration of our first floor later this year. The new exhibit space will tell the story of how our area was the crossroads of American history. The exhibits will focus on:

- **Prehistory**– Nemacolin's Path, Ancient Native American trail through Cumberland,
- **1755** – Braddock's Road, started from Cumberland,
- **1811** – First National Road, originated in Cumberland,
- **1828** – America's first railroad, the B&O started and arrived in Cumberland 1842,
- **1828** – C&O Canal was started and arrived in Cumberland 1850.

The Allegany Museum is more than an education organization. We view ourselves as the catalyst for the economic revitalization of downtown Cumberland. While we are located within the Canal Place Heritage Area we also serve as the connection between Canal Place and Cumberland's Downtown business district. Our visitation has increased 40 percent over the past two years. During this period we had about 22,000 visitors from every State in the Union and 47 foreign countries. The majority of our visitors are from out-of-town. We have also taken the lead in creating a partnership with all the museums in both Allegany and Garrett counties to market Western Maryland as a destination for heritage tourism. Working with the Allegany County Tourism Office and Allegany College of Maryland, we have created tour packages to revive the motor coach tour business to our area. We have produced a Walking Tour of Cumberland with podcasts so visitors can hear short audio descriptions of the sites they are seeing. The museum is also the prime location for public and community meetings.

All these marketing efforts are certainly having a positive impact, but we need to provide the visitors with a national-class attraction. The table below explains the restoration work that

remains. The architect design studies have already been completed so we are ready to proceed.

### **CAPITAL FUNDING**

<b>Description (In Priority Order)</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
1. Construct a new façade to make the rear of our building the new entrance	\$1,500,000
2. Restore the first floor	\$250,000
3. Create a Children's Learning Center	\$250,000
4. Install a freight Elevator	\$500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>

It is well known that Allegany County is an economically challenged area of Maryland. Heritage tourism will give the area an essential economic boost as well as create pride in the region's history. We estimate that the construction phase of this project will generate over 47 new jobs. However, the economic impact will be greater as the area becomes a heritage destination. Tourism generates and continues to grow significant revenue integral to Maryland's economic vitality. An independent consultant to the Maryland Office of Tourism Development reports that tourism sales in Allegany County for 2013 totaled \$139.9 million. This is a 40 percent growth over the past five years. It means that tourists are spending over \$11 million per month in our county.

We are excited about the economic possibilities this project will have on Allegany County. Over the past several years the State has been a strong financial supporter of the museum. We are hopeful that you will continue that critical financial support.

Thank you. We will be happy to answer any questions.

# **Allegany Museum**

## **Testimony**

Before the Appropriations Committee  
Capital Budget Subcommittee  
Maryland House of Delegates

March 16, 2015

## **House Bill – HB 71**

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Allegany Museum  
3 Pershing Street  
Cumberland, Maryland

Accompanied by  
Victor Rezendes, Vice President Administration

Madam Chair and members of the Appropriations Committee

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