

January 2012

Visitor Center

In 2011, the visitor center welcomed 15,850 guests and hosted 57 meetings with 855 attendees. Up to 20% of guests didn't sign the guest books. Conservatively, the visitor center and museum served over 18,500 guests in 2011. The conference room hosted civic meetings and events such as Ozark EMS Christmas Party, a beauty pageant, and art shows.

The visitor center's most popular services were public restrooms, brochures, state road maps, and local information. About 90% of guests toured the museum.

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism estimates every visitor generates at least \$5 for the local economy. Someone taking a guided fishing trip or staying in a hotel spend far more than \$5, but folks that stop to use the restroom and get directions might not spend anything. Conservatively, the center helped generate at least \$80,000 for the community.

Between 750-1,000 information packets were sent to people who requested more information on Calico Rock or help planning their trip to town.

Museum

The museum remodeled our building in January-March, 2011, including building mezzanine railings, handicap accessibility, storage, installing new windows and façade, adding new lighting, and installing a new roof. In 2011, our bank loan was cut from \$80,000 to \$39,000.

The museum is becoming a premier destination. In January, we are building one-room school, general store, and homestead exhibits. At the same time, all of our exhibits will be refreshed and updated.

The foundation has generated \$90,000 in actual dollars toward our \$140,000 project in just 18 months of fundraising. At least 75% of that money was spent locally.

Fundraising

Our goal is to raise \$39,000 to retire the debt by December 31, 2012. We will also raise funds to improve exhibits, expand services, and reduce the city's financial burden to operate the center.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sold over \$19,000 in merchandise from March 15 until December 31. The average sale is \$25. All of the merchandise is handcrafted by 30 local artisans that help staff the museum. The foundation retains about \$300 per month in profit which operates the museum. We anticipate increased sales in 2012 generating sales tax revenue and increase revenue for local businesses.

Promoting Calico Rock

In 2011, Calico Rock was promoted in articles which appeared in the *Arkansas Living* magazine (rural electric customers); *The Baxter Bulletin*, *Log Cabin Democrat* (Conway), *Texarkana Gazette*, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, *Batesville Daily Guard*; and featured in a news story on an Atlanta television station. All of this was free publicity. Our website generated over 5,000 hits.

Website Services

A service we provide to the city is an expanded museum website including visitor information, downloadable visitor and relocation guides, and links to helpful websites. We invite you to visit the site at www.calicorockmuseum.com and provide feedback.

Implementing the Contract

We have provided the property inventory to Clerk Stacy Stanford. Our executive committee has drafted conference room guidelines. We have begun tentative discussions with the Chamber regarding a possible contract for services. We anticipate having something to present to you at your February meeting.

We are providing liability insurance coverage at both facilities. We have hired Gloria Gushue as executive director. We held a pre-employment conference with Ms. Gushue discussing position duties, responsibilities, and policy. The foundation is in full compliance with all aspects of the contract.

Moving Forward

The entire board appreciates the opportunity to serve the citizens of Calico Rock and looks forward to working with you in the coming year. We will be proactive in improving our services and learning from past experiences.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees