

Sparks Museum & Cultural Center

814 Victorian Ave. • Sparks, NV 89431 • (775) 355-1144 • www.SparksMuseum.org

2015 ANNUAL REPORT TO SPARKS CITY COUNCIL

Museum Mission: The Sparks Heritage Foundation and Museum, Inc. aims to preserve the historical heritage of Sparks and the Truckee Meadows for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Today I am presenting an Annual Report covering the calendar year 2015. In the future we will be reporting on our Fiscal Year (July 1 through June 30) to synchronize our “year” with the Sparks City’s “year.” Therefore, our next report will cover only the period January 1 through June 30, 2016, with all reports thereafter covering the previous fiscal year.

For the Sparks Heritage Museum and Cultural Center, 2015 was a very good year. Our continued success can be attributed to support from the City of Sparks, the Sparks community in general, our 297 museum members, 36 active museum volunteers (who, collectively, contributed over 5,909 hours of service), and our gracious donors (see Appendix A). We also want to take this opportunity to recognize the young adults from the Reno chapter of Trinity Services, Inc., an extraordinary group of volunteers who clean the Bicentennial Train every week. The museum’s partnership with Trinity keeps the train in good condition and helps fulfill Trinity’s mission of “support[ing] people with disabilities to live more full and abundant lives.”

In May we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Museum Foundation by a small group of Sparks residents who believed in the museum as they articulated in the Mission Statement above.

January 2015 found us without an Executive Director (our only paid position) due to the unexpected resignation of the previous ED due to her family having to relocate to southern Nevada for her husband’s new job there. Fortunately, after an open search for a new ED, we were soon able to employ Ms. Kelly Reis as a half-time Museum Manager (she has since been promoted to Executive Director!). Ms. Reis has done an exemplary job taking over the reins of our day-to-day management.

The membership of the Board of Trustees was been relatively stable during 2015, with only one resignation and one new member (see Attachment B for a list of current members).

As illustrated in Attachment C, we were financially stable during 2015, albeit never flush with funds, and finished the year with a positive bank balance. That said, we are still working with a bare-bones budget with slim room for major new expenditures without identifying new sources

of income. Along this line, and with the support of a prominent Sparks resident, we initiated an effort to establish an endowment fund with the Community Foundation of Western Nevada. There are on-going efforts to identify other possible income sources and we hope to be in a more sustainable financial position in the future.

A month-by-month list of the major activities that the museum accomplished during 2015 is provided in Attachment D.

2015 Visitors:

Museum [based on actual count recorded by desk receptionists]

6,975

Percentages: Nevada Sparks 25%; Nevada Reno 9%; Nevada Other 16%; California 22%; Other States 25%, and Other Country 3% [Based on visitor register sign in (not all visitors sign the register)]

Bicentennial Train Exhibit [based on actual count]

4,196, visitors; of which 824 were on school or scouting tours, or children with adults

Projects:

Last Chance Joe Restoration

As you are aware, the effort to save Last Chance Joe from the junk heap was successfully achieved on December 1, 2014, just in time to welcome the citizens who attended the 2014 Sparks Hometown Christmas Parade. As the 2015 year passed Joe began to show some deterioration and by summer it was obvious that he was in desperate need of some serious restoration. It has been hypothesized that during the move from the Nugget Casino Resort to the Museum (which involved an extended period of horizontal “rest” on his back on a flatbed trailer while his new pedestal was designed and constructed), a number of micro cracks developed in his previously impervious covering, allowing moisture to enter the underlying papier-mâché, causing serious delamination.

Fortunately, with the help of the Sparks City management, especially Councilwoman Ratti and City Manager Driscoll, along with financial commitment from the Silverwing Development Management, we were able to identify a local gentleman who has been involved in saving and restoring local trade signs and murals, Mr. Will Durham. With technical advice from a restoration consultant from Warner Brothers Studios, Mr. Durham initiated the effort to stabilize and restore Joe during the Fall of 2015, completing the necessary stabilization to ensure Joe’s intact survival through the current winter bad weather. As soon as the weather permits, Mr. Durham will complete the restoration, including complete repainting Joe using the historically correct colors, with anticipated completion later this year.

Reno-Tahoe International Airport Exhibit

Although installed at the entrance to the C concourse in 2014, the “Planes, Trains & Automobiles...From Runways to Rockets” Museum & Sparks exhibit remained in place thorough 2015 (and is currently still there minus the Doctor’s Buggy). This exhibit includes numerous informative graphic posters highlighting many of the attractions at the museum and along Victorian Ave, e.g., the Chinese Memorial, the Bicentennial Train, and the Glendale Schoolhouse. Recently, the Doctor’s Buggy was relocated from the Airport to the Nevada Museum of Art for inclusion in their new exhibition titled “The Horse.” The Sparks Heritage Museum & Cultural Center is to be given attribution for the loan of the buggy.

Archival Research Library

The Archival Library Project aims to create a publicly accessible archival library space, and facilitate access to the museum’s extensive research materials, including oral histories, family memoirs, literature specific to Sparks, early twentieth century census information and more than 3,500 digitized photographs. Providing a research space will encourage more active participation in documenting the history of Sparks and the Truckee Meadows.

The Sparks Heritage Museum prides itself in being an educational resource for the community, but due to current limitations more than a third of our research materials are in storage and inaccessible to both staff and the public. A \$5,000 grant from TransCanada in 2015 kicked off funding for the project, which will build bookcases and desks in the front gallery of the museum.

The Sparks Historic Tour App

The “Sparks Historic Tours” app showcases the rich history of Sparks and the Sparks Museum & Cultural Center, and is available for free on iPhone and Android devices. The app was sponsored by Nevada Humanities and Union Pacific and provides a GPS-based walking tour of downtown Sparks, and a museum self-guided tour with information about the exhibits.

The app has been downloaded more than 550 times since its launch in 2013. In 2015, the museum partnered with local historian Dr. Alicia Barber to add a historic tour of Prater Way. Users can now explore more Sparks locations with historic photographs and information.



Sparks (Museum) Nevada State Specialty License Plate



Due to the herculean efforts of Trustee Richard Dreiling, on October 28, 2015 the Nevada Commission on Special License Plates approved a specialty license plate for the Museum (the conceptual design is shown above, the final design will be decided by the DMV). This project was started in mid-2010 and the Museum paid the annual fee of \$300 for the \$5,000 bond required to maintain our place on the queue of proposed new specialty plates. The Museum Board of Trustees approved Dick's concept of using the more generic slogan of "Heritage of Sparks" so that the new plates both recognize the Heritage Museum and would likely have more appeal to Sparks residents not associated with the Museum.

The process from approval of a new plate until it is released for public use is complex and involves final design by DMV staff, selection of the final design by the Museum (with input from Sparks staff), and approval by law enforcement (for visibility and reflectivity) may take some time but we are hoping it will be by the end of 2016.

Once the final design is approved by all involved it will be released for purchase by the public and we will then have one year to get a minimum of 1,000 car owners to indicate that they will buy the new plate in lieu of their existing plate. If 1,000 or more plates are sold, the Museum will receive a minimum of \$25,000 the first year and \$20,000 per year thereafter.

CCA Grant (Number CCA-14-13)

In late 2014, the Museum received notification from the Nevada Commission for Cultural Affairs that we were approved to receive a grant of \$35,000 for purposes of exterior repairs and painting, as well as repair and painting of all windows (inside and outside) of the historic Branch Library Building (814 Victorian Ave). While accomplishing the final pre-award requirements in the Spring of 2015, it was noted that one of the covenants that must be accepted to receive the grant required the owner (i.e., City of Sparks) to commit to keeping the building open to the public for 40 years. Because of our inability to make such a legal commitment, and in consultation with City management, it was decided to decline the award and efforts would be made to accomplish the work through a contract to be issued by the City of Sparks, likely during the City's 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Moving Forward:

- Increase frequency and expand topic breadth of programming
- Refine a financial strategy to sustain SHM
- Expand and improve facilities
- Initiate a fundraising strategy to support operations and expansion goals

- Recruit additional volunteers, especially those who can commit to one or two 2.5 hour shifts at the reception desk on a regular weekly schedule (morning & afternoon shifts, Tuesday through Friday, and one 3 hour shift on Saturday afternoon).

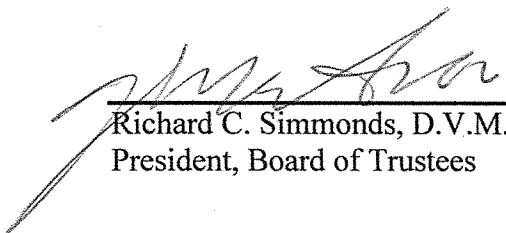
Appendices:

A – 2015 Major Donors List

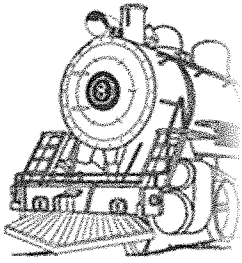
B – Current Board of Trustees List

C – 2015 Profit & Loss with Comparison to CY 2014

D – Major Activities for Calendar year 2015



Richard C. Simmonds, D.V.M., M.S., DACLAM
President, Board of Trustees



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2015 Major Donors

TransCanada - \$5,000 (Archival Library)

Baldini's - \$5,000 (LCJ)

Silverwing Development: \$11,000 [to date] (LCJ)

LandCap Investments: \$5,000 (LCJ)

Gordon Foote: \$1,000 (Printer)

Richard Simmonds: \$500 (Printer)

Richard Dreiling: \$500 (Printer)

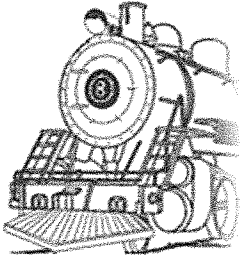
Kiwanis Club of Downtown Sparks \$2,500 (Education, Coloring Book)

Sparks Tribune: \$5,920 (In-Kind, Advertising Partnership)

Granite Construction: In-Kind Support for Christmas Float Construction and Parade Presentation

Nevada Humanities \$3,600 (2014 Western Heritage Festival – payment received in 2015)

Nevada Arts Council \$3,415 (2014 Western Heritage Festival – payment received in 2015)



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Current Board of Trustees

Executive Board

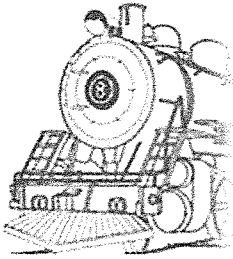
Richard Simmonds – President
Barbara Young – 1st Vice President
Eric Moody – 2nd Vice President
Frank Lawrence – Treasurer
Dick Dreiling – Secretary

Board

Donald Abbott
Scott Carey
Larry Champagne
Dennis DuPerault
Candace Nicol Garlock
Lyle Haven
Fred Horlacher
Nancy Reynolds
Larma Volk
JoAnne Waters

Executive Director

Kelly Reis



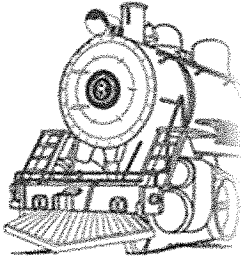
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Profit & Loss

January through December 2015

	Jan - Dec 15	Jan - Dec 14
Income		
Seminars & Presentations	0.00	237.00
Bus Tours	7,860.05	4,148.90
Photo Sales	235.00	450.00
Temporarily Restricted-Other	8,500.00	-515.00
Admissions	5,688.30	4,916.70
Contributions and Support	4,630.35	13,036.36
Facility Rental	4,070.00	3,639.90
Gift Shop Sales	4,175.54	2,173.75
Membership Dues	8,763.48	9,735.55
Other Fundraiser	2,299.10	0.00
Western Heritage Festival	7,015.00	10,315.00
Investment Interest	19.80	20.40
In-Kind Contributions	2,985.51	259.86
Other Income	43.96	455.70
Total Income	56,286.09	48,874.12
Gross Profit	56,286.09	48,874.12
Expense		
Bus Tour Expenses	2,506.22	2,003.29
Purchases (Gift Shop)	1,142.98	881.54
Preservation of Artifacts	1,032.24	0.00
Advertising	607.99	1,773.99
Bank Service Charges	253.50	160.26
Cash Short/Over	1.58	88.66
Conventions and Meetings	462.75	0.00
Display Materials	0.00	206.56
Dues & Memberships	0.00	1,115.00
In-Kind Expenses	2,985.51	259.86
Insurance-D & O Coverage	1,234.86	1,179.46
Insurance - General Liability	2,764.28	3,058.70
Insurance-Worker's Comp.	997.72	1,100.96
Legal and Professional Fees	335.00	325.00
Consulting-Building	0.00	658.27
Consulting-Fundraising	0.00	2,643.99
Consulting-General	0.00	987.94
Office Supplies	1,182.23	1,060.02
Other Event Expenses	415.00	589.00
Payroll Taxes	1,397.47	381.48
Postage and Delivery	576.77	480.69
Printing and Reproduction	687.68	0.00
Repairs & Maintenance	425.73	524.43
Salaries and Wages	21,267.00	5,967.00
Security	1,496.32	1,264.00
Supplies and Materials	443.65	224.50
Taxes & Licenses	325.00	325.00
Telephone, Internet, Website	3,071.74	2,718.61
Western Heritage Festival Exp.	0.00	12,214.97
Total Expense	45,613.22	42,193.18
Net Income	10,672.87	6,680.94



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2015 at a glance

January-March 2015

- Kelly Reis hired as museum manager
- Changing Gallery: Garden Model Railroad exhibit

April-May 2015

- Conference: Participated in Rural Roudup in Minden, Nev.
- Event: Celebrated museum's 30th anniversary
- Exhibit: Remembering 1980s

June 2015

- Cultural Center: "Sparks Up: Paint" art exhibit *free*
- Cultural Center: "Sparks Up: Print" art exhibit *free*
- Cultural Center: "Sparks Up: AP Art" art exhibit *free*
- Fundraiser: Dining to Donation with Applebee's

July 2015

- Cultural Center: "Impressions of Nevada" art exhibit *free*
- Reception: "Impressions of Nevada" *free*
- Changing Gallery: "Objects of Art and Utility" exhibit by Nevada Woodchucks
- Bus Tour: Historical tour of Pershing and Humboldt counties by Fred Horlacher

August 2015

- Kelly Reis promoted to Executive Director
- Event: Annual meeting and potluck
- Cultural Center: "Sparks Up: Polynesia" art exhibit *free*
- Fundraiser: Benefit with Yogurt Beach
- Fundraiser: Reno Aces

September 2015

- Conference: Participated in Nevada Museums Association conference in Tonopah, Nev.
- Reception: "Objects of Art and Utility" *free*

October 2015

- Lecture: Donner Party lecture by Fred Horlacher
- Bus Tour: Donner Party historic tour by Fred Horlacher
- Nonprofit license plate approved at Nevada Legislature's meeting of the Commission on Special License Plates

November 2015

- Cultural Center: Hometowne Sparks Artists art exhibit *free*
- Fundraiser: Book Blast and Membership Drive
- Lecture: Jim Bonar on the Lincoln Highway *free*
- Event: Volunteer Appreciation luncheon

December 2015

- Event: Sparks Hometown Christmas Parade Reception *free*
- Reception: Hometown Sparks Artists *free*
- Changing Gallery: Christmas Village and Polar Express
- Award: Best Float in Sparks Hometown Christmas Parade