

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

February 2012

Visitor Center

In January, 282 guests signed the guest books, we hosted 6 meetings, and 72 people used the facilities without signing the guest book. This represents a 27% increase over last year.

Museum

We have opened the new One Room School, General Store, and Railroad Depot exhibits. We are overhauling the remaining exhibits and installing the new Homestead exhibit.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$1,928.50 in January. We didn't open last year until March 15, so we are excited about the new revenue and sales tax.

Promoting Calico Rock

The museum & visitor center were featured on Mountain Home's Hometown Television, which generated guests who brought along out-of-state visitors.

Famed author John Grisham is releasing a new novel on April 10 entitled, *Calico Joe*. In the book, Joe Castle becomes the "greatest rookie baseball has ever known" after growing up in Calico Rock, Arkansas. We have invited Mr. Grisham to conduct a book signing at the center and to host other events in town.

Operational Report

The foundation is upgrading the electrical service in the conference room and making the first bathroom handicap accessible. We met our first payroll in January, paid all taxes and bills, and have filed all returns. The foundation provided electricity for the Christmas lights on upper Main Street at a cost of about \$100.

Upcoming Events

The Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism selected the museum and Main Street Historic District for a Walking History Tour on June 9, 2012. Between 50-250 city officials, parks & tourism leaders, and Chambers of Commerce throughout the state are expected to attend. We were selected because of the museum and our unique architecture.

On March 17, we will host *Life After the Civil War* to unveil the new One Room School, General Store, and Homestead exhibits. This event is being sponsored, in part, by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council.

Moving Forward

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

March 2012

Visitor Center

In February, 364 guests visited the museum/visitor center and we hosted 4 meetings. This is a 3% increase over January. Our tourist season should begin in March.

Telephone System

We installed a new phone system allowing the city to eliminate voicemail services saving \$10 per month (\$120/year). The new system has call forwarding, call waiting, caller id, and an answering system at no charge. These services allow us to be more responsive at a cheaper cost. We can track the number of incoming calls for another data source showing the value of the center. We have begun tracking incoming calls and will be providing that data to you in April.

Physical Plant

We are restoring the Coal House and installing the new Homestead exhibit area. It has been 10-12 years since we last painted the visitor center, so we did some touch-up painting to make everything look fresh. We are working with Stephen Hicks and Justin Sanders on developing a plan for the first bathroom that doesn't meet code. As you know, we are not using this bathroom until the issue is resolved. We will provide details soon.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$1,118.16 in February. Again, we didn't open the gift shop until March 15 last year so we have no data to compare.

Promoting Calico Rock

The museum & visitor center received a lot of press attention in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Three Rivers Edition*, *Batesville Daily Guard*, and *Baxter Bulletin* for the opening of our new exhibit areas. There were 57 people that attended our open house in February.

Upcoming Events

You are invited to attend the *Life After the Civil War* public program event, sponsored in part by the Arkansas Humanities Council, on Saturday, March 17, 2012 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Brooke Barksdale and friends are providing live music, lunch cooked over the coals will be available for purchase, and there will be an art show featuring work by all of the elementary students organized by Connie Martin.

Moving Forward

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

April 2012

Visitor Center

March was a huge month for the museum and visitor center. We had a total of 939 visitors and guests. We had 386 people sign the guest books and another 96 guests who did not sign the book. We hosted 5 meetings with 65 people in attendance.

We had several tours and special functions that brought 392 guests to the museum. These included tours for the Kindergarten, 2nd grade, and 4th grade classes from the elementary school. These tours allowed for our students to learn about our history and keep their field trips in town. The *Life After the Civil War* public program drew 245 people on Saturday, March 17. The reception to honor Hazel May on Saturday, March 31 was attended by 75 people.

Telephone Calls

We received 828 incoming phone calls in March. This is the first month we have been able to track the number of incoming calls. Approximately 25% were from local numbers for citizens seeking information or offering their help on a particular project. The remaining calls were from out of town. This is an average of 41 calls per day.

Physical Plant

We have been looking at options for the first bathroom, which cannot be made handicap accessible. Justin Sanders advises we do not need this bathroom to meet code. In fact, he says we only need one bathroom in the visitor center and one in the museum, if the buildings were stand-alone facilities.

Because it is unnecessary and impractical as a bathroom, we would like to convert this space to a staff-only “kitchenette” and storage space. This would require minimal construction and not cost the city anything to remove the toilet, make it one level, and use the existing kitchen sink. This will be a better use for the space in the long term. Without objection, we will proceed with this work when money becomes available.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$2,134.32 in March.

Promoting Calico Rock

Calico Rock was featured on the *Talk of the Town* radio program on KTLO. A great article appeared in the *Living Well* magazine.

The museum was well represented at the **Arkansas Museums Association** annual meeting. The museum and visitor center won the **2011 Website of the Year Award**. This is a prestigious award, especially considering the association includes large museums such as the Clinton Presidential Library & Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and all of the state-operated museums. At the same meeting, Ed Matthews received the **2011 Volunteer of the Year Award**.

Report to the City Council of Calico Rock

Community Support Continues to Grow

The support of our community continues to grow for the great work we are doing at the museum and visitor center. While we have many faithful supporters who attend nearly every function we host, we continue to grow the number of first-time visitors to the museum. We estimate about 75% of our *Life After the Civil War* public program were first-time visitors. An estimated 80% of the people attending Hazel May's reception were first-time visitors.

The museum intends to host future receptions to honor community servants. If you would like to recommend someone for this honor please let me know. I'd like to share a photo from the reception with you:



Upcoming Events

Our next big event will be the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War skirmish at Calico Rock on May 26. We are planning reenactment activities to commemorate this event.

Moving Forward

It is a pleasure to serve our community. Feel free to call me at 870-373-0083 anytime.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees

May 2012

Visitor Center

April is typically a slower month due to lots of school activities. We also did not have any big events planned during the month. Even so, we had a total of 724 visitors and guests, with 674 signing the guest book. We hosted 7 meetings with 62 people in attendance. We received 276 incoming phone calls in April.

While April was slower than March, our total guests were more than January and February combined and only 13% lower than March. So, we have been very pleased with the usage.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$1,378 in April. Our year to date sales are \$6,559.

Promoting Calico Rock

Calico Rock was featured in another positive article in *Avenues* magazine this month.

Upcoming Events

We are putting a lot of effort into planning the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War skirmish at Calico Rock on May 26. There will be re-enactment activities scheduled in Rand Park and other activities at the museum & visitor center. This should be a great event.

On June 9, we will welcome the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism's *Walk Through History Tour*. Tourism professionals and guests will be coming to town. The focus is on our museum and the historic Main Street. The architecture on Main Street is highly unusual and of great interest to many tourists.

Other Thoughts

We continue to look for ways to promote the New York Times Bestselling book, *Calico Joe*, and translate the book's success into growth for Calico Rock. We continue to develop our donor relationships and maximize our grant opportunities to strengthen our financial position. We have applied for a grant to assist in the conversion of the bathroom into a kitchen service area.

Moving Forward

It is a pleasure to serve our community. Feel free to call me at 870-373-0083 anytime.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees

June 2012

Visitor Center

In May, we had a total of 685 visitors and guests. Of these, 430 people signed the guest book, 25 people attended 3 meetings, there were 225 incoming phone calls, and at the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War Skirmish at Calico Rock, we had 200 people in attendance. We mailed 100 packets of information in response to inquiries.

Guest Contact Cost

We always strive to evaluate the effectiveness of our services and to provide you with good data. We will now provide you a total number of guest contacts and a quarterly cost per guest contact. In other words, we can tell you how much each visitor contact cost the city. Year to date, we have had **4,207 guest contacts**.

Our year-to-date **cost per visitor contact is \$2.26**. During that same time, each visitor **generated \$4.14 in sales** at our gift shop. If each visitor is spending at least \$5 in town during their visit then the community is realizing a 222% return on the investment you have made in visitor center operations.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$1,600 in May. Our year-to-date sales are \$8,159.

Upcoming Events

On June 9, we will welcome the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism's *Walk Through History Tour*. There will be one tour at 11:00 a.m.

Other Thoughts

We are renovating the landing to the stairs leading to our basement. This space is being transformed into an interactive Native American exhibit. The exhibit space will premiere at a program on Saturday, September 8, including authentic Native American dance.

Moving Forward

It is a pleasure to serve our community. Feel free to call me at 870-373-0083 anytime.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees

August 2012

Visitor Center

In July, we had a total of 722 visitors and guests. Of these, 472 people signed the guest book, 55 people attended 5 meetings, 103 visited during the canoe races, and there were 275 incoming phone calls for a total of 997 visitor contacts.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$2,198 in July with year-to-date sales of \$13,925. These numbers indicate our guests are doing more than coming into the building to use the restroom. This means guests are looking at museum exhibits, taking brochures, getting helpful information, and shopping our gift shop which is generating over \$5 in sales per visitor contact.

Financial Update

Our board and executive committee continue to closely monitor the center operations and work with our staff to provide the most efficient, highest quality services possible. Our board is investing in ways to cut your energy costs such as installing a programmable thermostat that save the city up to 15% on reduced energy costs. We will install an on-demand water heater when we renovate the bathroom into a kitchenette which should provide another 20% savings. Both will cost the foundation on the front-end, they will both save the city substantially in energy costs *every month*. This is part of our commitment to continuously improve operations.

Upcoming Events

On September 8, we will host the *Native American Heritage Day* and we have scheduled *The Ozarks Art of Survival* on October 27. Planning events requires a fair amount of time, but they certainly pay off with increased visitors, improved sales in local businesses, and positive public relations throughout the region. Our staff does an excellent job planning and executing these events which provides tremendous return on the city's investment.

Contract Extension

Our board is committed to continuing the great work we have begun this year for the community and will seek an extension of our contract for 2013. We look forward to working with you in approving a seamless contract extension.

Moving Forward

It is a pleasure to serve our community. Feel free to call me at 870-373-0083 anytime.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees

August 2012

Visitor Center

In August, we had a total of 581 visitors and guests. Of these, 422 people signed the guest book, 65 people attended 10 meetings, 25 mailings, and there were 200 incoming phone calls for a total of 781 visitor contacts. Most folks avoid traveling during the “dog days” of summer and as everyone prepare to go back to school. Thus, August is typically one of the slower months of the year. Yet, we still posted very solid numbers.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$1,391 in August with year-to-date sales of \$15,288. We have generated over \$1,300 in sales tax this year.

Return on Investment

We have intentionally taken a very conservative approach to compiling statistics for you. For example, our guests generally come in groups. However, typically only one person signs the guest book. This is especially true of larger groups and families. Similarly, we have little data to know how much money each tourist spends in other businesses in town. We do know that the each visitor has generated an average of \$5 in gift shop sales. It makes sense that each visitor is generating even more money in other businesses.

Based on state Department of Parks & Tourism estimates, our guests have generated over \$175,000 in revenue for the local economy. If these estimates are true, the investment you have made in the visitor center has produced an 8% return on investment. We personally believe these figures are too conservative, but there is little data to know.

Cooperation

We have been pleasantly surprised by the amount of cooperative we are receiving from the community for our Native American exhibit and event. The Cherokee Nation and Choctaw Nation have been very supportive of our efforts. Calico Rock is viewed as an important location in the birth of the Ozarks. We are excited about the prospects for growth.

Moving Forward

It is a pleasure to serve our community. Feel free to call me at 870-373-0083 anytime.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees

November 2012

Visitor Center

We had strong and steady numbers in October. In October, we had 953 visitor contacts. We had 688 visitors, 35 people attended 4 meetings, 100 people attended our Homesteading special event, 19 high school students toured the museum, we mailed 21 information packets, and there were 265 incoming phone calls.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$2,211 in October with YTD sales of \$19,813.

Looking Forward

In 2013, the museum will commemorate the 110th anniversary of the building of the railroad and construction of the upper buildings along Main Street. It is also the 90th anniversary of the rebuilding of the buildings on lower Main Street after the fire of 1923. It is also the 110th anniversary of the first passenger train to Calico Rock. We are planning events to mark these occasions, which were major developments for our community.

We will also celebrate Native American Day on September 14, 2013.

Contract Extension

Tonight, the council will consider the extension of our contract for visitor center services. We have enjoyed working with you this year and look forward to the continued work we can do together in the future. We would appreciate a good vote on this contract extension and budget request.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or ideas, we want to hear from you. After all, we work for you and the people of Calico Rock. It is a pleasure to serve our community. Feel free to call me at 870-373-0083 anytime.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees

December 2012

Visitor Center

In November, we had 536 visitor contacts, including: 384 visitors, 42 people attended 4 meetings, 15 school students toured the museum, we mailed 15 information packets, and there were 95 incoming phone calls. Our year-to-date visitor contacts have been 11,619.

Museum Gift Shop & Cooperative

Our gift shop/cooperative sales were \$2,943 in November with YTD sales of \$22,755.

Winter Improvements

This winter the museum will make a number of improvements to the facilities, including: installing the kitchenette into the visitor center bathroom; completing a total renovation of the museum's basement to include a conference center, storage, and exhibit space; installing a few new exhibits in the museum's mezzanine; making general improvements, repairs, and touch-up painting; and doing some restoration work to the Coal House.

In the Coal House, we will make repairs to the windows that will improve the security and safety of the building while preserving the historic character of the building. We also plan to install a "floating" wooden floor in the Coal House. This floor will be made from treated lumber and will not be attached to the concrete floor. The concrete is broken and uneven and presents a tremendous safety risk and liability to the city. The wooden floor is the best option because it won't impact the historic nature of the building, will fit into the period of the building, and will not be permanent. It can be removed at any time with no damage to the building. This improvement is being sponsored by the Questers as a special project of the museum foundation. This improvement will be made in January unless the council has any questions or concerns.

None of these improvements will impact the normal operations of the museum or visitor center.

Thank you

The museum has enjoyed working for and with the city this year. We appreciate the efficient extension of our contract for 2013. We work for you and look forward to continually improving the services we provide the city and the people of Calico Rock.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or ideas, we want to hear from you. It is a pleasure to serve our community. Feel free to call me at 870-373-0083 anytime.

/s/ Steven Mitchell

Submitted by Steven Mitchell
Chairman, Board of Trustees